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OF

# THE RIGHT HON. F. MAX MÜLLER

XVIII

*LAST ESSAYS*

II. ESSAYS ON THE SCIENCE OF RELIGION

# LAST ESSAYS

BY THE

RIGHT HON. PROFESSOR F. MAX MÜLLER, K.M.

LATE FOREIGN MEMBER OF THE FRENCH INSTITUTE

*SECOND SERIES*

ESSAYS ON THE SCIENCE OF RELIGION

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# PREFACE

In the preface to the First Series of my father's Last Essays, I expressed the hope that I should be able, at the expiration of a year from the date of publication of the last of his articles on the Religions of China, to bring out a further volume of his Essays not hitherto republished.

Thanks to the kindness of the editors of the various reviews in which these articles first appeared, I am enabled to offer to the public a Second Series of Last Essays, dealing exclusively with subjects connected with the Science of Religion, the favourite study of my father during the latter part of his literary career.

But besides this obligation to the editors of the *Nineteenth Century* and other periodicals, I am further indebted to the kindness of Mr. Archibald Douglas, who not only gave me permission to include his article on his visit to the Monastery of Himis in connexion with Notovitch's *Unknown Life of Christ*, but also

supplied me with a supplementary note giving further details of his investigations.

The essay on Ancient Prayers has never, as far as I can ascertain, been published before. On looking through my father's papers I discovered it among several unfinished essays, and as it was apparently ready for press I have included it in the present volume.

The last essay, 'Is Man Immortal?' has also never been published in England, though it appeared in several American newspapers some years ago under the auspices of the American Press Association. I am very grateful to that Association for supplying me with the manuscript which enables me to give it here as originally written. I have placed this article at the end of the volume, as it seemed to me that, whether they agree with its reasoning or not, every reader of my father's writings will feel that the last paragraph forms a beautiful ending to his literary work, a fitting farewell to the world which he was always trying to instruct and improve.

W. G. MAX MÜLLER.

SAN SEBASTIAN,
*October* 12, 1901.

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# LAST ESSAYS.

## FORGOTTEN BIBLES[1].

THE first series of Translations of the *Sacred Books of the East*[2], consisting of twenty-four volumes, is nearly finished, and a second series, which is to comprise as many volumes again, is fairly started. Even when that second series is finished, there will be enough material left for a third and fourth series, and though I shall then long have ceased from my labours as editor, I rejoice to think that the reins when they drop out of my hands will be taken up and held by younger, stronger, and abler conductors.

I ought indeed to be deeply grateful to all who have helped me in this arduous, and, as it seemed at first, almost hopeless undertaking. Where will you get the Oriental scholars, I was asked, willing to give up their time to what is considered the most tedious and the most ungrateful task, translating difficult texts that have never been translated before, and not being allowed to display one scrap of recondite learning in long notes and essays, or to skip one single passage, however corrupt or unintelligible?

[1] *Nineteenth Century*, June, 1884.

[2] Forty-eight volumes are now printed.—Ed.

And if you should succeed in assembling such a noble army of martyrs, where in these days will you find the publisher to publish twenty-four or forty-eight portly volumes, volumes which are meant to be studied, not to be skimmed, which will never be ordered by Mudie or Smith, and which conscientious reviewers may find it easier to cut up than to cut open?

It was no easy matter, as I well knew, to find either enthusiastic scholars or enthusiastic publishers, but I did not despair, because I felt convinced that sooner or later such a collection of translations of the Fathers of the Universal Church would become an absolute necessity. My hope was at first that some very rich men who are tired of investing their money, would come forward to help in this undertaking, but though they seem willing to help in digging up mummies in Egypt or oyster-shells in Denmark, they evidently do not think that much good could come from digging up the forgotten Bibles of Buddhists or Fire-worshippers. I applied to learned Societies and Academies, but, of course, they had no disposable funds. At last the Imperial Academy of Vienna—all honour be to it—was found willing to lend a helping hand. But in 1875, just when I had struck my tent at Oxford to settle in Austria, the then Secretary of State for India, Lord Salisbury, and the Dean of Christ Church, Dr. Liddell, brought their combined influence and power of persuasion to bear on the Indian Council and the University Press at Oxford. The sinews of war were found for at least twenty-four volumes. In October, 1876, the undertaking was started, and, if all goes well, in October,

1884, the first series of twenty-four volumes will stand on the shelves of every great library in Europe, America, and India. And more than that. Such has been the interest taken in this undertaking by the students of ancient language, religion, and philosophy, that even the unexpected withdrawal of the patronage of the India Office under Lord Salisbury's successor[1] could not endanger the successful continuation of this enterprise, at least during the few years that I may still be able to conduct it.

But while personally I rejoice that all obstacles which were placed in our way, sometimes from a quarter where we least expected it, have been removed, and that with the generous assistance of some of the best Oriental scholars of our age, some at least of the most important works illustrating the ancient religions of the East have been permanently rescued from oblivion and rendered accessible to every man who understands English, some of my friends, men whose judgement I value far higher than my own, wonder what ground there is for rejoicing. Some, more honest than the rest, told me that they had been great admirers of ancient Oriental wisdom till they came to read the translations of the Sacred Books of the East. They had evidently expected to hear the tongues of angels, and not the babbling of babes. But others took higher ground. What, they asked, could the philosophers of the nineteenth century expect to learn from the thoughts and utterances of men who had lived one, two, three, or four thousand years ago? When I humbly suggested that these

[1] The expense of the Second Series has been entirely defrayed by the Oxford University Press.—Ed.

books had a purely historical interest, and that the history of religion could be studied from no other documents, I was told that since Comte's time it was perfectly known how religion arose, and through how many stages it had to pass in its development from fetishism to positivism, and that whatever facts might be found in the Sacred Books of the East, they must all vanish before theories which, like all Cŏmtian theories, are infallible and incontrovertible. If anything more was to be discovered about the origin and nature of religion, it was not from dusty historical documents, but from psycho-physiological experiments, or possibly from the creeds of living savages.

I was not surprised at these remarks. I had heard similar remarks many years ago, and they only convinced me that the old antagonism between the historical and theoretical schools of thought was as strong to-day as ever. This antagonism applies not only to the study of religion, but likewise to the study of language, mythology, and philosophy, in fact of all the subjects to which my own labours have more specially been directed for many years, and I therefore gladly seize this opportunity of clearly defining once for all the position which I have deliberately chosen from the day that I was a young recruit to the time when I have become a veteran in the noble army of research.

There have been, and there probably always will be, two schools of thought, the *Historical* and the *Theoretical*. Whether by accident or by conviction I have been through life a follower of the Historical School, a school which in the study of every branch of human knowledge has but one and the same principle,

namely, '*Learn to understand what is by learning to understand what has been.*'

That school was in the ascendent when I began life. It was then represented in Germany by such names as *Niebuhr* for history, *Savigny* for law, *Bopp* for language, *Grimm* for mythology; or, to mention more familiar names, in France by *Cuvier* for natural history; in England by a whole school of students of history and nature, who took pride in calling themselves the only legitimate representatives of the Baconian school of thought.

What a wonderful change has come over us during the last thirty or forty years! The Historical School which, in the beginning of our century, was in the possession of nearly all professorial chairs, and wielded the sceptre of all the great Academies, has almost dwindled away, and its place has been taken by the Theoretical School, best known in England by its eloquent advocacy of the principles of evolution. This Theoretical School is sometimes called the *synthetic*, in opposition to the Historical School, which is *analytic*. It is also characterized as *constructive*, or as reasoning *a priori*. In order to appreciate fully the fundamental difference between the two schools, let us see how their principles have been applied to such subjects as the science of language, religion, or antiquities.

The Historical School, in trying to solve the problem of the origin and growth of language, takes language as it finds it. It takes the living language in its various dialects, and traces each word back from century to century, until from the English now spoken in the streets, we arrive at the Saxon of

Alfred, the Old Saxon of the Continent, and the Gothic of Ulfilas, as spoken on the Danube in the fifth century. Even here we do not stop. For finding that Gothic is but a dialect of the great Teutonic stem of language, that Teutonic again is but a dialect of the great Aryan family of speech, we trace Teutonic and its collateral branches, Greek, Latin, Celtic, Slavonic, Persian, and Sanskrit, back to that Proto-Aryan form of speech which contained the seeds of all we now see before us, as germs, plants, flowers, fruits in the languages of the Aryan race.

After having settled this historical outline of the growth of our family of speech, the Aryan, we take any word, or a hundred, or a thousand words, and analyse them, or take them to pieces. That words can be taken to pieces, every grammar teaches us, though the process of taking them to pieces scientifically and correctly, dissecting limb from limb, is often as difficult and laborious as any anatomical preparation. Well, let us take quite a modern word—the American *cute*, sharp. We all know that *cute* is only a shortening of *acute*, and that *acute* is the Latin *acutus*, sharp. In *acutus*, again, we easily recognize the frequent derivative *tus*, as in *cornutus*, horned, from *cornu*, horn. This leaves us *acu*, as in *acu-s*, a needle. In this word the *u* can again be separated, for we know it is a very common derivative, in such words as *pec-u*, cattle, Sanskrit pasú, from PA*S*, to tether; or *tanú*, thin, Greek ταν*ύ*, Lat. *tenu-i-s*, from TAN, to stretch. Thus we arrive in the end at AK, and here our analysis must stop, for if we were to divide AK into A and K, we should get, as even Plato knew (*Theaetetus*, 205), mere letters, and

no longer significant sounds or syllables. Now what is this AK? We call it a root, which is, of course, a metaphor only. What we mean by calling it a root is that it is the residuum of our analysis, and a residuum which itself resists all further analysis. But what is important is that it is not a mere theoretic postulate, but a fact, an historical fact, and at the same time an ultimate fact.

With these ultimate facts, that is, with a limited number of predicative syllables, to which every word in any of the Aryan languages can be traced back, or, as we may also express it, from which every word in these languages can be derived, the historical school of comparative philology is satisfied, at least to a certain extent; for it has also to account for certain pronouns and adverbs and prepositions, which are not derived from predicative, but from demonstrative roots, and which have supplied, at the same time, many of those derivative elements, like *tus* in *acu-tus*, which we generally call suffixes or terminations.

After this analysis is finished, the historical student has done his work. AK, he says, conveys the concept of sharp, sharpness, being sharp or pointed. How it came to do that we cannot tell, or, at least, we cannot find out by historical analysis. But that it did so, we can prove by a number of words derived from AK in Sanskrit, Persian, Greek, Latin, Celtic, Slavonic, and Teutonic speech. For instance: Sanskrit âsu, quick (originally sharp), Greek ὠκύς, Lat. *oc-ior*, Lat. *ac-er*, eager, *acus*, *acuo*, *acies*, *acumen*; Greek ἀκμή, the highest point, our *edge*, A.-S. *ecg*; also to *egg* on; ἄκων, a javelin, *acidus*, sharp, bitter, *ague*, a sharp

fever, *ear* of corn, Old High German *ahir*, Gothic *ahs*, Lat. *acus*, *aceris*, husk of grain, and many more.

Let us now look at the Theoretical School and its treatment of language. How could language arise? it says; and it answers, Why, we see it every day. We have only to watch a child, and we shall see that a child utters certain sounds of pain and joy, and very soon after imitates the sounds which it hears. It says *Ah!* when it is surprised or pleased; it soon says *Baa!* when it sees a lamb, and *Bow-wow!* when it sees a dog. Language, we are told, could not arise in any other way; so that interjections and imitations must be considered as the ultimate, or rather the primary facts of language, while their transition into real words is, we are assured, a mere question of time.

This theory seems to be easily confirmed by a number of words in all languages, which still exhibit most clearly the signs of such an origin; and still further, by the fact that these supposed rudiments of human speech exist, even at an earlier stage, in the development of animal life, namely, in the sounds uttered by many animals; though, curiously enough, far more fully and frequently by our most distant ancestors, the birds, than by our nearest relation, the ape.

It is not surprising, therefore, that all who believe in a possible transition from an ape to a man should gladly have embraced this theory of language. The only misfortune is that such a theory, though it easily explains words which really require no explanation, such as crashing, cracking, creaking, crunching, scrunching, leaves us entirely in the lurch when we come to deal with real words—I mean words expressive

of general concepts, such as man, tree, name, law—in fact, nine-tenths of our dictionary.

I certainly do not wish to throw unmerited contempt on this Theoretical School. Far from it. We want the theorist quite as much as the historian. The one must check the other, nay, even help the other, just as every government wants an opposition to keep it in order, or, I ought perhaps to say, to give it from time to time new life and vigour. I only wished to show by an example or two, what is the real difference between these two schools, and what I meant when I said that, whether by temperament, or by education, or by conviction, I myself had always belonged to the Historical School.

Take now the science of religion, and we shall find again the same difference of treatment between the historian and the theorist.

The *theorist* begins by assuring us that all men were originally savages, or, to use a milder term, children. Therefore, if we wish to study the origin of religion, we must study children and savages.

Now at the present moment some savages in Africa, Australia, and elsewhere are supposed to be fetish-worshippers. Therefore we are assured that five thousand or ten thousand years ago religion must have begun with a worship of fetishes—that is, of stones, and shells, and sticks, and other inanimate objects.

Again, children are very apt not only to beat their dolls, but even to punish a chair or a table if they have hurt themselves against it. This shows that they ascribe life and personality—nay, something like human nature—to inanimate objects, and hence we

are told that savages would naturally do the same. A savage, in fact, is made to do everything that an anthropologist wishes him to do; but, even then, the question of all questions, why he does what he is supposed to do, is never asked. We are told that he worships a stone as his god, but how he came to possess the idea of God, and to predicate it of the stone, is called a metaphysical question of no interest to the student of anthropology—that is, of man. If, however, we press for an answer to this all-important question, we are informed that *animism*, *personification*, and *anthropomorphism* are the three well-known agencies which fully account for the fact that the ancient inhabitants of India, Greece, and Italy believed that there was life in the rivers, the mountains, and the sky; that the sun, and the moon, and the dawn were cognizant of the deeds of men, and, finally, that Jupiter and Juno, Mars and Venus, had the form and the beauty, the feelings and passions of men. We might as well be told that all animals are hungry because they have an appetite.

We read in many of the most popular works of the day how, from the stage of fetishism, there was a natural and necessary progress to polytheism, monotheism, and atheism, and after these stages have been erected one above the other, all that remains is to fill each stage with illustrations taken from every race that ever had a religion, whether these races were ancient or modern, savage or civilized, genealogically related to each other, or perfect strangers.

Again, I must guard most decidedly against being supposed to wish to throw contempt or ridicule on

this school. Far from it. I differ from it; I have no taste for it; I also think it is often very misleading. But to compare the thoughts and imaginations of savages and civilized races, of the ancient Egyptians, for instance, and the modern Hottentots, has its value, and the boldest combinations of the Theoretic School have sometimes been confirmed in the most unexpected manner by historical research.

Let us see now how the Historical School goes to work in treating of the origin and growth of religion. It begins by collecting all the evidence that is accessible, and classifies it. First of all, religions are divided into those that have sacred books, and those that have not. Secondly, the religions which can be studied in books of recognized or canonical authority, are arranged genealogically. The New Testament is traced back to the Old, the Koran to both the New and Old Testaments. This gives us one class of religions, the *Semitic*.

Then, again, the sacred books of Buddhism, of Zoroastrianism, and of Brâhmanism are classed together as Aryan, because they all draw their vital elements from one and the same Proto-Aryan source. This gives us a second class of religions, the *Aryan*.

Outside the pale of the Semitic and Aryan religions, we have the two book-religions of China, the old national traditions collected by Confucius, and the moral and metaphysical system of Lao-tse. This gives us a class of Turanian religions. The study of those religions which have sacred books is in some respects easy, because we have in these books authoritative evidence on which our further reasonings and conclusions can be safely based. But, in other

respects, the very existence of these books creates new difficulties, because, after all, religions do not live in books only, but in human hearts, and where we have to deal with Vedas, and Avestas, and Tripiṭakas, Old and New Testaments, and Korans, we are often tempted into taking the book for the religion.

Still the study of book-religions, if we once have mastered their language, admits, at all events, of more definite and scientific treatment than that of native religions which have no books, no articles, no tests, no councils, no pope. Any one who attempts to describe the religion of the ancient Greeks and Romans—I mean their real faith, not their mythology, their ceremonial, or their philosophy—knows the immense difficulty of such a task. And yet we have here a large literature, spread over many centuries, we know their language, we can even examine the ruins of their temples.

Think after that, how infinitely greater must be the difficulty of forming a right conception, say, of the religion of the Red Indians, the Africans, the Australians. Their religions are probably as old as their languages, that is, as old as our own language; but we know nothing of their antecedents, nothing but the mere surface of to-day, and that immense surface explored in a few isolated spots only, and often by men utterly incapable of understanding the language and the thoughts of the people. And yet we are asked to believe by the followers of the Theoretic School that this mere surface detritus is in reality the granite that underlies all the religions of the ancient world, more primitive than the Old

Testament, more intelligible than the Veda, more instructive than the mythological language of Greece and Rome. It may be so. The religious map of the world may show as violent convulsions as the geological map of the earth. All I say to the enthusiastic believers in this contorted evolution of religious thought is, let us wait till we know a little more of Hottentots and Papúans; let us wait till we know at least their language, for otherwise we may go hopelessly wrong.

The Historical School, in the meantime, is carrying on its more modest work by publishing and translating the ancient records of the great religions of the world, undisturbed by the sneers of those who do not find in the Sacred Books of the East what they, in their ignorance, expected—men, who, if they were geologists would no doubt turn up their noses at a kitchen-midden, because it did not contain their favourite lollypops. Where there are no sacred texts to edit and to translate, the true disciples of the Historical School—men such as, for instance, Bishop Caldwell or Dr. Hahn in South Africa, Dr. Brinton or Horatio Hale in North America —do not shrink from the drudgery of learning the dialects spoken by savage tribes, gaining their confidence, and gathering at last from their lips some records of their popular traditions, their ceremonial customs, some prayers, it may be, and some confession of their ancient faith. But even with all these materials at his disposal, the historical student does not rush at once to the conclusion that either in the legends of the Eskimos or in the hymns of the Vedic Âryas, we find the solution of all the riddles in the science of religion. He only says that we are not

likely to find any evidence much more trustworthy, and that therefore we are justified in deriving certain lessons from these materials. And what is the chief lesson to be learnt from them? It is this, that they contain certain words and concepts and imaginations which are as yet inexplicable, which seem simply irrational, and require for their full explanation antecedents which are lost to us; but that they contain also many words and concepts and imaginations which are perfectly intelligible, which presuppose no antecedents, and which, whatever their date may be, may be called primary and rational. However strange it may seem to us, there can be no doubt that the perception of the Unknown or the Infinite was with many races as ancient as the perception of the Known or the Finite, that the two were, in fact, inseparable. To men who lived on an island, the ocean was the Unknown, the Infinite, and became in the end their God. To men who lived in valleys, the rivers that fed them and whose sources were unapproachable, the mountains that protected them, and whose crests were inaccessible, the sky that overshadowed them, and whose power and beauty were unintelligible, these were their unknown beings, their infinite beings, their bright and kind beings, what they called their Devas, their 'Brights,' the same word which, after passing through many changes, still breathes in our *Divinity*.

This unconscious process of theogony is historically attested, is intelligible, requires no antecedents, and is, so far, a primary process. How old it is, who would venture to ask or to tell? All that the Historical School ventures to assert is that it explains one side of the origin of religion, namely, the gradual process

of naming or conceiving the Infinite. While the Theoretic School takes the predicate of God, when applied to a fetish, as granted, the Historical School sees in it the result of a long-continued evolution of thought, beginning with the vague consciousness of something invisible, unknown, and unlimited, which gradually assumes a more and more definite shape through similes, names, myths, and legends, till at last it is divested again of all names, and lives within us as the invisible, inconceivable, unnameable—the infinite God.

I need hardly say that though in the science of religion as in the science of language, all my sympathies are with the Historical School, I do not mean to deny that the Theoretical School has likewise done some good work. Let both schools work on, carefully and honestly, and who knows but that their ways, which seem so divergent at present, may meet in the end.

Nowhere, perhaps, can we see the different spirit in which these two schools, the Historical and the Theoretical, set to work, more clearly than in what is called by preference the Science of Man, *Anthropology*; or the Science of People, *Ethnology*; or more generally the science of old things, of the works of ancient men, *Archaeology*. The Theoretic School begins, as usual, with an ideal conception of what man must have been in the beginning. According to some, he was the image of his Maker, a perfect being, but soon destined to fall to the level of ordinary humanity. According to others, he began as a savage, whatever that may mean, not much above the level of the beasts of the field, and then had to work his way up through suc-

cessive stages which are supposed to follow each other by a kind of inherent necessity. First comes the stage of the hunter and fisherman, then that of the breeder of cattle, the tiller of the soil, and lastly that of the founder of cities.

As man is defined as an animal which uses tools, we are told that according to the various materials of which these tools were made, man must again by necessity have passed through what are called the three stages or ages of stone, bronze, and iron, raising himself by means of these more and more perfect tools to what we might call the age of steel and steam and electricity, in which for the present civilization seems to culminate. Whatever discoveries are made by excavating the ruins of ancient cities, by opening tombs, by ransacking kitchen-middens, by exploring once more the flint-mines of prehistoric races, all must submit to the fundamental theory, and each specimen of bone or stone or bronze or iron must take the place drawn out for it within the lines and limits of an infallible system.

The Historical School takes again the very opposite line. It begins with no theoretical expectations, with no logical necessities, but takes its spade and shovel to see what there is left of old things; it describes them, arranges them, classifies them, and thus hopes in the end to understand and explain them. When a Schliemann begins his work at Hissarlik he digs away, notes the depth at which each relic has been found, places similar relics side by side, unconcerned whether iron comes before bronze, or bronze before flint. Let me quote the words of a young and very careful archaeologist, Mr. Arthur Evans, in describing

this kind of work, and the results which we obtain from it[1].

'In the topmost stratum of Hissarlik,' he writes '(which some people like to call Troy), extending six feet down, we find remains of the Roman and Macedonian Ilios, and the Aeolic colony; and the fragments of archaic Greek pottery discovered (hardly distinguishable from that of Sparta and Mykenai) take us back already to the end of the first millennium before our era.

Below this, one superposed above the other, lie the remains of no less than six successive prehistoric settlements, reaching down to over fifty feet below the surface of the hill. The formation of this vast superincumbent mass by artificial and natural causes must have taken a long series of centuries; and yet, when we come to examine the lowest deposits, the remains of the first and second cities, we are struck at once with the relatively high state of civilization at which the inhabitants of this spot had already arrived.

The food-remains show a people acquainted with agriculture and cattle-rearing, as well as with hunting and fishing. The use of bronze was known, though stone implements continued to be used for certain purposes, and the bronze implements do not show any of the refined forms—notably the *fibulae*—characteristic of the later Bronze Age.

Trade and commerce evidently were not wanting. *Articles de luxe* of gold, enamel, and ivory were already being imported from lands more directly under Babylonian and Egyptian influence, and jade axeheads came by prehistoric trade-routes from the Kuen-Lun, in China. The local potters were already acquainted with the use of the wheel, and the city walls and temples of the second city evince considerable progress in the art of building.'

Such is the result of the working of the Historical School. It runs its shaft down from above; the Theoretical School runs its shaft up from below. It may be that they are both doing good work, but such is the strength of temperament and taste, even among scientific men, that you will rarely see the same person working in both mines; nay, that not seldom you hear the same disparaging remarks made by one

[1] *Academy*, December 29, 1883.

party and the other, which you may be accustomed to hear from the promoters of rival gold-mines in India or in the south of Africa.

I might show the same conflict between Historical and Theoretical research in almost every branch of human knowledge. But, of course, we are all most familiar with it through that important controversy, which has occupied the present generation more than anything else, and in which almost every one of us has taken part and taken sides—I mean the controversy about Evolution.

It seems almost as if I myself had lived in prehistoric times, when I have to confess that, as a young student, I witnessed the downfall of the theory of Evolution which, for a time, had ruled supreme in the Universities of Germany, particularly in the domain of Natural History and Biology. In the school of Oken, in the first philosophy of Schelling, in the eloquent treatises of Goethe, all was Evolution, Development, or as it was called in German, *Das Werden*, the Becoming. The same spirit pervaded the philosophy of Hegel. According to him, the whole world was an evolution, a development by logical necessity, to which all facts must bow. If they would not, *tant pis pour les faits.*

I do not remember the heyday of that school, but I still remember its last despairing struggles. I still remember at school and at the University rumours of Carbon, half solid, half liquid, the famous *Urschleim*, now called Protoplasm, the Absolute Substance out of which everything was evolved. I remember the more or less amusing discussions about the loss of the tail, about races supposed to be still in possession of that

ancestral relic. I well remember my own particular teacher, the great Greek scholar Gottfried Hermann[1], giving great offence to his theological colleagues by publishing an essay in 1840 in which he tried to prove the descent of man from an ape. Allow me to quote a few extracts from this rare and little noticed essay. As the female is always less perfect than the male, Hermann argued that the law of development required that Eve must have existed before Adam, not Adam before Eve. Quoting the words of Ennius—

'Simia quam similis, turpissima bestia, nobis,'

he goes on in his own peculiar Latin:—

'Ex hac nobili gente quid dubitemus unam aliquando simiam exortam putare, quae paullo minus belluina facie et indole esset? Ea, sive illam Evam sive Pandoram appellare placet, quum ex alio simio gravida facta esset, peperit, ut saepenumero fieri constat, filium matri quam patri similiorem, qui primus homo fuit.

Haec ergo est hominis generisque humani origo, non illa quidem valde honesta, sed paullo tamen honestior multoque probabilior, quam si ex luto aqua permixto, cui anima fuerit inspirata, genus duceremus.'

Surely Gottfried Hermann was a bolder man than even Darwin, and to me who had attended his lectures at Leipzig in 1841, Darwin's *Descent of Man*, published in 1871, was naturally far less novel and startling by its theory than by the facts by which that theory was once more supported. Kant's philosophy also had familiarized students of Anthropology with the same ideas. For he, too, towards the end of his *Anthropologie*, had spoken of a third period in the development of nature, when an Oran-Utang or

[1] 'Evam ante Adamum creatam fuisse, sive de quodam communi apud Mosen et Hesiodum errore circa creationem generis humani,' in Ilgen's *Zeitschrift für die histor. Theologie*, 1840, B. X. pp. 61–70.

Chimpanzee may develop his organs of locomotion, touch, and speech to the perfection of human organs, raise his brain to an organ of thought, and slowly elevate himself by social culture.

But this was not all. Oken (1779–1851) and his disciples taught that the transition from inorganic to organic nature was likewise a mere matter of development. The first step, according to him, was the formation of rising bubbles, which he called infusoria, and the manifold repetition of which led, as he taught, to the formation of plants and animals. The plant was represented by him as an imperfect animal, the animal as an imperfect man. To doubt that the various races of men were descended from one pair was considered at that time, and even to the days of Prichard, not only a theological, but a biological heresy. All variety was traced back to unity—and in the beginning there was nothing but Being; which Being, coming in conflict with Not-being, entered upon the process of Becoming, of development, of evolution. While this philosophy was still being preached in some German universities, a sharp reaction took place in others, followed by the quick ascendency of that Historical School of which I spoke before. It was heralded in Germany by such men as Niebuhr, Savigny, Bopp, Grimm, Otfried Müller, Johannes Müller, the two Humboldts, and many others whose names are less known in England, but who did excellent work, each in his own special line.

I have tried to describe the general character of that school, and I have to confess that during the whole of my life I have remained a humble disciple of it. I am not blind to its weak points. It fixes

its eye far too much on the individual; it sees differences everywhere, and is almost blind to similarities. Hence the bewildering mass of species which it admitted in Botany and Zoology. Hence its strong protest against the common origin of mankind; hence its still stronger protest against the transition from inorganic to organic life, from the plant to the beast, from the beast to the man. Hence, in the science of language, its reluctance to admit even the possibility of a common origin of human speech, and, in the science of religion, its protest against deriving the religion of civilized races from a supposed anterior stage of fetishism. Hence in Geology its rejection of Plutonic and Volcanic theories, and its careful observation of the changes that have taken place, or are still taking place, on the surface of the earth, within, or almost within, the historical recollection of man.

In the careful anatomy of the eye by Johannes Müller, and his philosophical analysis of the conditions of the process of seeing, we have a specimen of what I should call the best work of the Historical School, even in physical science. In Mr. Herbert Spencer's account of the origin of the eye, we have a specimen of what I call the best work of the Theoretical School. Mr. Spencer tells us that what we now call the eye consisted originally of a few pigmentary grains under the outermost dermal layer, and that rudimentary vision is constituted by the wave of disturbance which a sudden change in the state of these pigmentary grains propagates through the body; or, to put it into plain English, that the eye began with some sore place in the skin, sensitive to light, which smarted or tickled, and thus developed

in time into what is now the most wonderful mechanism, as described by Johannes Müller, Helmholtz, and others.

Now I have little doubt that many of my readers who have patiently followed my argument up to this point, will say to themselves: 'What then about Darwinism?' Is that *historical* or *theoretic*? Is it a mere phase in the evolution of thought, or is it something permanent, and beyond the reach of further development? Such a question is not easy to answer. Nothing is so misleading as names—I mean, even such names as materialism, idealism, realism, and all the rest—which, after all, admit of some kind of definition. But when we use a proper name—the name of a philosopher—and then speak of all he has been and thought and taught, as his *ism*, such as Puseyism or Darwinism, the confusion becomes quite chaotic. And with no one is this more the case than with Darwin. The difference between Darwin and many who call themselves Darwinians, is as great at least as that between the horse and the mule. But Darwin himself is by no means a man who can be easily defined and classified. The very greatness and power of Darwin seem to me to consist in his combining the best qualities of what I have called the Historical and Theoretical Schools. So long as he observes and watches the slow transition of individual peculiarities into more or less permanent varieties; so long as he exhibits the changes that take place before our very eyes by means of artificial breeding, as in the case of pigeons; so long as he shows that many of the numberless so-called species among plants or animals share all that is essential in

common, and differ by accidental peculiarities only; so long as he traces living species back to extinct species, the remains of which have been preserved to us in the geological archives of our globe; so long, in fact, as he goes backward, step by step, and opens to us page after page in the forgotten book of life, he is one of the greatest and most successful representatives of the Historical School. But when his love of systematic uniformity leads him to postulate four beginnings for the whole realm of organic life, though not yet *one,* like his followers; when he begins to sketch a possible genealogical tree of all generations of living things, though not yet with the heraldic minuteness of his pupil, Professor Haeckel; when he argues that because natural selection can account for certain very palpable changes, as between the wolf and the spaniel, it may also account for less palpable differences, as between the ape and the man, though no real man of science would venture to argue in that way; when, in fact, he allows his hopes to get the better of his fears, he becomes a follower and a very powerful supporter of the Theoretic School.

It may be the very combination of these two characters which explains the enormous influence which Darwin's theories have exercised on the present generation; but, if so, we shall see in that combination the germs of a new schism also, and the conditions of further growth. Great as was Darwin's conscientiousness, we cannot deny that occasionally his enthusiasm, or his logical convictions, led him to judge of things of which he knew nothing, or very little. He had convinced himself that man was genealogically descended from an animal. That

was as yet merely a theoretical conviction, as all honest zoologists—I shall only mention Professor Virchow—now fully admit. As language had been pointed out as a Rubicon which no beast had ever crossed, Darwin lent a willing ear to those who think that they can derive language, that is, real *logos*, from interjections and mimicry, by a process of spontaneous evolution, and produced himself some most persuasive arguments. We know how able, how persuasive a pleader Darwin could be. When he wished to show how man could have descended from an animal which was born hairy and remained so during life[1], he could not well maintain that an animal without hair was fitter to survive than an animal with hair. He therefore wished us to believe that our female semi-human progenitors lost their hair by some accident, were, as Hermann said, 'minus belluina facie et indole,' and that in the process of sexual selection this partial or complete baldness was considered an attraction, and was thus perpetuated from mother to son. It was difficult, no doubt, to give up Milton's Eve for a semi-human progenitor, suffering, it may be, from leprosy or leucoderma, yet Darwin, like Gottfried Hermann, nearly persuaded us to do so. However, in defending so hopeless, or, at all events, so unfortified a position as the transition of the cries of animals into the language of man, even so great a general as Darwin undoubtedly was will occasionally encounter defeat, and, I believe I may say without presumption, that, to speak of no other barrier between man and beast, the barrier of language remains as unshaken as ever,

[1] *Descent of Man*, ii. p. 377, where more details may be found as to the exact process of baldness or denudation in animals.

and renders every attempt at deriving man genealogically from any known or unknown ape, for the present at least, impossible, or, at all events, unscientific.

After having described, however briefly and imperfectly, the salient features of the two great schools of thought, the *Historical* and the *Theoretical*, I wish in a few words to set forth the immense advantage which the followers of the Historical School enjoy over the mere theorist, not only in dealing with scientific problems, but likewise in handling the great problems of our age, the burning questions of religion, philosophy, morality, and politics.

History, as I said before, teaches us to understand what is by teaching us to understand what has been. All our present difficulties are difficulties of our own making. All the tangles at which we are pulling were made either by ourselves, or by those who came before us. Who else should have made them? The Historical School, knowing how hopeless it is to pull and tear at a tangled reel by main force, quietly takes us behind the scenes, and shows us how first one thread and then another and a third, and in the end hundreds and thousands of threads went wrong, but how in the beginning they lay before man's eyes as even and as regular as on a weaver's loom.

Men who possess the historical instinct, and who whenever they have to deal with any of the grave problems of our age always ask how certain difficulties and apparent contradictions first arose, are what we should call practical men, and, as a rule, they are far more successful in unravelling knotty questions than the man who has a theory and a remedy ready for everything, and who actually prides himself on

his ignorance of the past. I think I can best make my meaning clear by taking an instance. Whether Dean Stanley was what is now called a scientific historian, a very laborious student of ancient chronicles and charters, is not for me to say; but if I were asked to define his mind, and his attitude towards all the burning questions of the day, whether in politics, or morality, or religion, I should say it was historical. He was a true disciple of the Historical School. I could show it by examining the position he took in dealing with some of the highest questions of theology. But I prefer, as an easier illustration, to consider his treatment of one of the less exciting questions, the question of vestments. Incredible as it may seem, it is a fact nevertheless that not many years ago a controversy about surplices, and albs, and dalmatics, and stoles raged all over England. The question by whom, at what time, and in what place, the surplice should be worn, divided brother from brother, and father from child, as if that piece of white linen possessed some mysterious power, or could exercise some miraculous influence on the spirit of the wearer. Any one who knew Stanley would know how little he cared for vestments or garments, and how difficult he would have found it to take sides, either right or left, in a controversy about millinery or ritual. But what did he do? 'Let us look at the surplice *historically*,' he said. What is a surplice? —and first of all, what is the historical origin or the etymology of the word. *Surplice* is the Latin *super-pellicium*. *Super-pellicium* means what is worn over a fur or fur-jacket. Now this fur-jacket was not worn by the primitive Christians in Rome, or Constanti-

nople, or Jerusalem, nor is there any mention of such a vestment at the time of the Apostles. What, then, is the history of that fur-jacket? So far as we know, it was a warm jacket worn by German peasants in the colder climate of their country, and it was worn by laity and clergy alike, as in fact all garments were which we now consider exclusively ecclesiastical. As this fur-jacket was apt to get dirty and unsightly, a kind of smock-frock, that could be washed from time to time, was worn over it—and this was called the *super-pellicium*, the surplice.

Stanley thought it sufficient gently to remind the wearer of the surplice that what he was so proud of was only the lineal descendant of a German peasant's smock-frock; and I believe he was right, and his historical explanation certainly produced a better effect on all who had a sense of history and of humour than the most elaborate argument on the mystical meaning of that robe of purity and innocence.

He did the same with other vestments. Under the wand of the historian, the *alb* turned out to be the old Roman tunic or shirt, and the deacon officiating in his alb was recognized as a servant working in his shirt-sleeves. The *dalmatic*, again, was traced back to the shirt with long sleeves worn by the Dalmatian peasants, which became recognized as the dress of the deacon about the time of Constantine. The *cassock* and *chasuble* turned out to be great coats, worn originally by laity and clergy alike—while the *cope*, descended from the *copa* or *capa*, also called *pluviale*, was translated by Stanley as a 'waterproof.' The *mitre* was identified with the caps and turbans worn

in the East by princes and nobles, and to this day by the peasant women. The division into two points was shown to be the mark of the crease which is the consequence of its having been folded and carried under the arm, like an opera-hat. The *stole*, lastly, in the sense of a scarf, had a still humbler origin. It was the substitute for the *orarium* or handkerchief, used for blowing the nose. No doubt, the possession and use of a handkerchief was in early times restricted to the 'higher circles.' It is so to the present day in Borneo, for instance, where only the king is allowed to carry a handkerchief and to blow his nose. In like manner then as in Borneo the handkerchief became the insignia of royalty, it rose in the Roman Church to become the distinctive garment of the deacon.

I know that some of these explanations have been contested, and rightly contested, but the general drift of the argument remains unaffected by such reservations. I only quote them in order to explain what I meant by Stanley's historical attitude, an attitude which all who belong to the Historical School, and are guided by an historical spirit, like to assume when brought face to face with the problems of the day.

But what applies to small questions applies likewise to great. Instead of discussing the question whether the mystic marriage between Church and State can ever be dissolved, the historian looks to the register and to the settlements, in order to find out how that marriage was brought about. Instead of discussing the various theories of inspiration, the historian asks, who was the first to coin the word? In what sense

did he use it? Did he claim inspiration for himself or for others? Did he claim it for one book only, or for all truth? How much light can be thrown on this subject by a simple historical treatment may be seen in some excellent lectures, delivered lately before a Secularist audience by Mr. Wilson[1], the Head Master of Clifton College, in the presence of the Bishop of Exeter, and published under the title, *The Theory of Inspiration, or, Why men do* not *Believe the Bible.*

And this historical treatment seems to me the best, not only for religious and philosophical, but also for social problems. Who has not read the eloquent pages of Mr. Henry George on *Progress and Poverty*? Who has not pondered on his social panacea, the nationalization of the land? It is of little use to grow angry about these questions, to deal in blustering rhetoric, or hysterical invective. So long as Mr. Henry George treats the question of the tenure of land historically, his writings are extremely interesting, and, I believe, extremely useful, as reminding people that a great portion of the land in England was not simply bought for investment, but was granted by the sovereign on certain conditions, such as military service, for instance. Those who held the land had to defend the land, and it may well be asked why that duty, or why the taxes for army and navy, should now fall equally on the whole country. It might be said that all this happened a long time ago. But the reign of Charles the Second does not yet belong so entirely to the realm of fable that the nation might not trace its privileges back to that time quite as much as certain families

[1] Now the Archdeacon of Rochdale.

whose wealth dates from the same period. Again, if Mr. Henry George shows that in more recent times common land was enclosed in defiance of historical right, he is doing useful work, if only by reminding lords of the manor that they should not court too close an inspection of their title-deeds. If there are historical rights, there are historical rights on both sides, on the side of those who have no land quite as much as on the side of those who have, and surely we are all of us most thankful that at the time of Charles the Second, and earlier still, at the time of Henry the Eighth, some large tracts of land were nationalized—were confiscated, in fact—that is, transferred from the hands of former proprietors to the fiscus, the national treasury. What would our national Universities be without nationalized land? They would have to depend, as in Germany, on taxation, and be administered, as in Germany, by a Government Board. If, at the same time, some more land had been nationalized in support of schools, hospitals, almshouses, aye, even in support of army and navy, instead of being granted to private individuals, should we not all be most grateful? But though we may regret the past, we cannot ignore it, and, to quote Mr. Henry George's own words, 'instead of weakening and confusing the idea of property, we should surround it with stronger sanctions.'

So far all historical minds would probably go with Mr. Henry George. But when he joins the Theoretical School, and tells us that every human being born into this world has a divine right to a portion of God's earth, it is difficult to argue with him, for how does he know it? Again, how does he know how much it

should be, and, what is more important still, in what part of the world it should be? An acre of land in the city of London is very different from an acre of land in Australia. Besides, what is the use of land unless it has been cleared? An old Indian lawgiver says very truly, 'The deer belongs to him who sticks his arrow into him, and the land to him who digs the stumps out of it[1].' If a man by his spade has made a piece of waste land worth having, surely it belongs to him as much as a sheet of paper belongs to the man who has made it worth having by his pen.

But, though I do not see how, with any regard for the rights of property, which Mr. Henry George regards as sacred, the nationalization of the land could ever be carried out in an ancient country, such as England, without fearful conflicts, or without a religious revival, nor how it could effect, by itself alone, the cure of the crying evils of the present state of our society, I admire Mr. Henry George for the truths, the bitter truths, which he tells us, and it seems to me sheer intellectual cowardice to say that his ideas are dangerous, and should not be listened to. The facts which he places before us are dangerous, but there is far less danger in his theories, even if we all accepted them. We all hold theories which might be called dangerous, if we ever thought of carrying them out. We all hold the theory that we ought to love our neighbour exactly as our-

[1] In Australia, if two or more spears are found in the same animal when killed, it is the property of him who threw the first. Nicolay, *Account of the Natives of Western Australia*, Perth, 1879, p. 11.

selves; but no one seems afraid that we should ever do so.

One more question still waits for an answer. Although the historical treatment may be the best, and the only efficacious treatment of all problems affecting religion, philosophy, morality, and politics, should we not follow up our tangles in a straight line, from knot to knot, from antecedent to antecedent? And if so, what can be the use of the Sacred Books of the East for the religious problems of the West? What light can the Rig-veda or the Vedânta philosophy of India throw on Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*? How can the Koran help us in facing modern problems of morality? How can the Laws of Manu, applicable to the village system of ancient India, help us in answering the social problems of Mr. Henry George?

Perhaps the readiest answer I can give, is—Look at the sciences of Language, of Mythology, of Religion. What would they be without the East? They would not even exist. We have learnt that history does not necessarily proceed from the present to the past in one straight line only. The stream of history runs in many parallel branches, and each generation has not only fathers and grandfathers, but also uncles and great-uncles. In fact, the distinguishing character of all scientific research in our century is comparison. We have not only comparative philology, but also comparative jurisprudence, comparative anatomy, comparative physiology. Many points in English Law become intelligible only by a comparison with German Law. Many difficulties in German Law are removed by a reference to Roman or Greek Law. Many even

of the most minute rules of German, Roman, and Greek Law become intelligible only by a reference to the ancient customs and traditions preserved in the Law-books of India.

This being so, it follows that a real historical study of the ancient language, the ancient philosophy, and the ancient religion of the East, and, more particularly of India, may have its very important bearing on the questions nearest to our own hearts. The mere lesson that we are not the only people who have a Bible, that our theologians are not the only theologians who claim for their Bible a divine inspiration, that our Church is not the only Church which has declared that those who do not hold certain doctrines cannot be saved, may have its advantages, if rightly understood.

These indirect lessons are often far more impressive than any more direct teaching. We see them ourselves, or we must draw them for ourselves, and that is always a better discipline than when we have simply to accept what we are told. It may seem a roundabout way, and yet it often leads to the end far more rapidly than a more direct route, nay, in some cases it is the only practicable route.

Let us take comparative anatomy as an illustration. We all of us want to know what our bodily organism is like, how we see or hear, how we breathe, how we digest—in fact, how we live. But for a long time people shrank from dissecting a human body. They then took a mollusk, or a fish, or a bird, or a dog, or even so man-like an animal as an ape, and they soon grew accustomed to the idea that the muscles, bones, nerves, or even brains in the

anatomical preparations correspond to their own muscles, their own bones, their own nerves, even their own brains. They gladly listened to an explanation how all these organs work together in the bodies of animals, and produce results very similar to those which they know from their own experience. Their mind thus grew stronger, larger, and more comprehensive—it may be, more tolerant.

If after a time you go a step further, and bring a dead human body before them to dissect it before their eyes, there will be at first a little shudder creeping over them, something like the feeling which a young curate might have when recognizing for the first time the smock-frock of a German peasant as the prototype of his own beloved surplice. However, even that shudder might possibly be overcome, and in the end some useful lesson might be learned from seeing ourselves as we are in the flesh.

But now suppose some bold vivisectionist were to venture beyond, and to dissect before our eyes a living man, in order to show us how we really breathe, and digest, and live, or in order to make us see what is right and wrong in his system. We should all say it was horrible, intolerable. We should turn away, and stop the proceedings.

If we apply all this, *mutatis mutandis*, to a study of religion, we shall readily understand the great advantages not only of an historical study of our own religion, but also of a comparative study of Eastern religions as they can be studied now in the translations of the Sacred Books of the East. Those who are willing to learn may learn from a comparative study of Eastern religions all that can be known

about religions—how they grow, how they decay, and how they spring up again. They may see all that is good and all that is bad in various forms and phases of ancient faith, and they must be blinder than blind if they cannot see how the comparative anatomy of those foreign religions throws light on the questions of the day, on the problems nearest to our own hearts, on our own philosophy, and on our own faith.

# ANCIENT PRAYERS

THERE are few religions, whether ancient or modern, whether elaborated by uncivilized or civilized people, in which we do not find traces of prayer. Hence, if we consult any work on the science or on the history of religion, we generally find prayer represented as something extremely natural, as something almost inevitable in any religion. It may seem very natural to *us*, but was it really so very natural in the beginning?

What was the meaning of prayer? It is always best to begin with the etymology of a word, if we want to know its original or its most ancient meaning. It is generally supposed that prayer was at first what its name implies in English, a petition. Our own word prayer is derived from a mediaeval Latin word *precaria*, literally a bidding-prayer. In Latin we have *precari*, to ask, to beg, but also to pray in a more general sense; for instance, in such expressions as *precari ad deos*, to pray to the gods, which does not necessarily mean to ask for any special favours. We have also the substantive *prex*, mostly used in the plural *preces*, meaning a request, but more particularly a request addressed to the gods, a prayer or supplication. *Procus*, also, a wooer or suitor, and *procax*, a shameless beggar, both come from the same source.

[1] Not published before.

Originally the root from which these Latin words are derived had the more general meaning of asking or inquiring. It occurs in this sense in Sanskrit prasna, question, and in pri*kkh*âmi, to ask. We have the same element in Gothic *fraihnan*, and in the modern German *fragen*, to ask. Even the German *forschen*, to inquire, which gives us *Forschung*, *Forscher*, and *Sprachforscher*, a student of language, was derived from the same root. If, then, by prayer was meant originally a petition, we ask once more, Was it really so very natural that people in all parts of the world, in ancient as well as in modern times, should have asked beings whom they had never seen to give them certain things, something to eat or something to drink, though, as a matter of fact, they knew that they had never directly received anything of the kind from these invisible hands?

It used to be said that prayers were originally addressed to the spirits of the departed, and not to gods. This opinion has been revived of late, but without much success. Historical evidence there is of course none, and no one would say that it was more natural to ask these departed spirits for valuable gifts than the gods. As a matter of fact, they had never been known to bestow a single tangible gift on their worshippers. Of course, there may have been cases where, as soon as a man had prayed to the spirit of his father to send rain on the parched fields, rain came down from the sky; but the fact that even we call such fulfilments *precarious*, that is prayer-like or uncertain (for *precarious* is likewise derived from *precari*), shows that we cannot call a belief in the efficacy of prayer very natural.

Prayer becomes in reality more natural and intelligible when it is addressed, not to ancestral spirits, who are often conceived as troublesome beggars rather than as givers, but to certain phenomena of nature in which men had recognized the presence of agents who became everywhere the oldest gods.

As the rain came from the sky, and as the sky was called *Dyaus* in Sanskrit, *Zeus* in Greek, we may indeed call it natural that the Athenians when they saw their harvest—that is, their very life, destroyed by drought, should have said: ὗσον ὗσον, ὦ φίλε Ζεῦ, κατὰ τῆς ἀρούρας τῶν Ἀθηναίων καὶ τῶν πεδίων.

'Rain, rain, O dear Sky, down on the land of the Athenians and on the fields[1].'

So natural is this Athenian prayer that we find it repeated almost in the same words among the Hottentots. Georg Schmidt, a Moravian missionary sent to the Cape in 1737, tells us that the natives at the return of the Pleiades assemble and sing together, according to the old custom of their ancestors, the following prayer: 'O Tiqua, our Father above our heads, give rain to us, that the fruits may ripen and that we may have plenty of food, send us a good year[2].'

But though prayers like these may, in a certain sense, be called natural and intelligible, they presuppose nevertheless a long series of antecedents. People must have framed a name for sky, such as *Dyaus*, which originally meant Bright or Light, or rather the agent and giver of light; they must have extended the sphere of action assigned to this agent so that he would be conceived not only as the giver

[1] *Science of Language*, New Edition, 1892, ii. p. 546.
[2] Introduction to the *Science of Religion*, p. 282.

of light and warmth, but likewise as the giver of rain, and at the same time as the lord of the thunderstorm, as the wielder of the thunderbolt, as the most powerful among the actors behind the other phenomena of the sky. Only after all this had been done, could they think of calling that Zeus or that Dyaus, dear (φίλος); and you perceive how that one word *dear* at once changes the sky into a being endowed with human feelings, a being dear to human beings and not altogether unlike them.

Now with regard to the belief of the ancient people in the efficacy of prayer and the fulfilment of their petitions, we must remember that the chances between rain and no rain are about equal. If, then, after days of drought a prayer for rain had been uttered, and there came rain, what was more natural than that those who had prayed to the sky for rain should offer thanksgiving to the sky or to Zeus for having heard their prayer, and that a belief should gradually grow up that the great gods of nature would hear prayers and fulfil them. Nor was that belief likely to be shaken if there was no rain in answer to prayer; for there was always an excuse. Either it might be said that he who offered the prayer had committed a mistake—this was a very frequent explanation—or that he was no favourite with the gods; or, lastly, that the gods were angry with the people, and therefore would not fulfil their prayers.

It might seem that it would have been just the same with prayers addressed to the spirits of the departed. But yet it was not quite so. The ancient gods of nature were representatives of natural powers, and as Zeus, the god of the sky, was naturally implored

for rain, the divine representatives of the sun would be implored either to give heat and warmth or to withhold them. Lunar deities might be asked for the return of many moons, that is to say, for a long life, the gods of the earth for fertility, the gods of the sea for fair wind and weather, the gods of rivers for protection against invaders, or against the invasion of their own floods. But there was nothing special that the spirits of the departed would seem able to grant. Hence the prayers addressed to them are mostly of a more general character. In moments of danger children would, by sheer memory, be reminded of their fathers or grandfathers who had been their guides and protectors in former years when threatened by similar dangers. A prayer addressed to the departed spirits for general help and protection might, therefore, in a certain sense be called natural; that is to say, even we ourselves, if placed under similar circumstances, might feel inclined to remember our parents and call for their aid, as if they were still present with us, though we could form no idea in what way they could possibly render us any assistance.

Let us see, then, what we can learn about prayers from the accounts furnished to us of the religions of uncivilized, or so-called primitive, people. We ought to distinguish between three classes of religion, called *ethnic*, *national*, and *individual*. The religions of unorganized tribes, in the lowest state of civilization, have been called *ethnic*, to distinguish them from the religions of those who had grown into nations, and whose religions are called *national*, while a third class comprises all religions which claim individual

founders, and have therefore been called *individual* religions.

Nowhere can we find the earliest phase of prayer more clearly represented than among the Melanesian tribes, who have been so well described to us by the Rev. Dr. Codrington. It is generally supposed that the religion of the inhabitants of the Melanesian islands consists entirely in a belief in spirits. Nothing can be more erroneous. We must distinguish, however, between ghosts and spirits. *Ghosts*, as Dr. Codrington tells us, are meant for the souls of the departed, while *spirits* are beings that have never been men. The two are sometimes mixed up together, but they are quite distinct in their origin. It seems that the spirits were always associated with physical phenomena, and thus were more akin to the gods of the Greeks and Romans. We hear of spirits of the sea, of the land, of mountains and valleys; and though we are told that they are simply ghosts that haunt the sea and the mountains, there must have been some reason why one is connected with the sea, another with the mountains; nay, their very abode would have imparted to each a physical character, even if in their origin they had been mere ghosts of the departed. These spirits and ghosts have different names in different islands, but to speak of any of them as missionaries are very apt to do, as either gods or devils, is clearly misleading.

The answers given by natives when suddenly asked what they mean by their spirits and ghosts are naturally very varying and very unsatisfactory. What should we ourselves say if we were suddenly asked as to what we thought a soul, or a spirit, or

a ghost to be? Still, one thing is quite clear, that these spiritual and ghostly beings of the Melanesians are invisible, and that nevertheless they receive worship and prayers from these simple-minded people. Some of their prayers are certainly interesting. Some of them seem to be delivered on the spur of the moment, others have become traditional and are often supposed to possess a kind of miraculous power, probably on account of having proved efficacious on former occasions.

There is a prayer used at sea and addressed to Daula, a ghost, or, in their language, a tindalo :—

'Do thou draw the canoe, that it may reach the land: speed my canoe, grandfather, that I may quickly reach the shore whither I am bound. Do thou, Daula, lighten the canoe, that it may quickly gain the land and rise upon the shore.'

Sometimes the ancestral ghosts are invoked together, as—

'Save us on the deep, save us from the tempest, bring us to the shore.'

To people who live on fish, catching fish is often a matter of life and death. Hence we can well understand a prayer like the following :—

'If thou art powerful, O Daula, put a fish or two into this net and let them die there.'

We can also understand that after a plentiful catch thanks should have been offered to the same beings, if only in a few words, such as—

'Powerful is the tindalo of the net.'

This is all very abrupt, very short, and to the point. They are invocations rather than real prayers.

Some of these utterances become after a time charms handed down from father to son, nay, even taught to

others for a consideration. They are then called *lehungai*[1].

Again, if a man is sick, the people call out the name of the sick man, and if a sound is heard in response, they say, 'Come back to life,' and then run to the house shouting, 'He will live.'

All this to a strict reasoner may sound very unreasonable; still, that it is in accordance with human nature, in an uncivilized and even in a civilized age, can easily be proved by a comparison of the prayers of other people, which we shall have to consider hereafter.

If it is once believed that the ghosts can confer benefits and protect from evil, it is but a small step to call on them to confound our enemies. Thus we read that in Mota when the oven is opened for preparing a meal, a leaf of cooked mallow is thrown in for some dead person. His ghost is addressed with the following words:—

'O Tataro!' (another name for the ghosts) 'this is a lucky bit for your eating; they who have charmed your food, or have clubbed you—take hold of their hands, drag them away to hell, let them be dead!'

And if, after this, the man against whom this imprecation is directed meets with an accident, they cry out:—

'Oh, oh! my curse in eating has worked upon him—he is dead.'

In Fiji prayer generally ends with these malignant requests:—

'Let us live, and let those that speak evil of us perish! Let the enemy be clubbed, swept away, utterly destroyed, piled in heaps! Let their teeth be broken. May they fall headlong in a pit. Let us live, and let our enemies perish!'

[1] Codrington, *The Melanesians*, chap. ix.

We must not be too hard on these pious savages, for with them there was only the choice between eating or being eaten, and they naturally preferred the former.

Before eating and drinking, the ghosts of the departed were often remembered at the family meal. Some drops of Kava were poured out, with the words:—

'Tataro, grandfather, this is your lucky drop of Kava; let boars come to me; let *rawe* come in to me: the money I have spent, let it come back to me: the food that is gone, let it come back hither to the house of you and me!'

On starting on a voyage they say:—

'Tataro, uncle! father! Plenty of boars for you, plenty of *rawe*, plenty of money; Kava for your drinking, lucky food for your eating in the canoe. I pray you with this, look down upon me, let me go on a safe sea!'

Prayers addressed to spirits who are not mere ghosts or departed souls, but connected with some of the phenomena of nature, seem to enter more into detail. Thus the Melanesians invoke two spirits (vui), Qat and Marawa:—

'Qat! you and Marawa,' they say, 'cover over with your hand the blow-hole from me, that I may come into a quiet landing-place; let it calm well down away from me. Let the canoe of you and me go up in a quiet landing-place! Look down upon me, prepare the sea of you and me, that I may go on a safe sea. Beat down the head of the waves from me; let the tide-rip sink down away from me; beat it down level, that it may go down and roll away, and I may come into a quiet landing-place. Let the canoe of you and me turn into a whale, a flying fish, an eagle; let it leap on end over the waves, let it go, let it pass out to my land.'

If all went well, need we wonder that the people believed that Qat and Marawa had actually come and held the mast and rigging fast, and had led the canoe home laden with fish! If, on the contrary,

the canoe and its crew were drowned, nothing could be said against the spirits, Qat and Marawa, and the priests at home would probably say that the crew had failed to invoke their aid as they ought to have done, so that, as you see, the odds were always in favour of Qat and Marawa.

Nowhere is a belief and a worship of ancestral spirits so widely spread as in Africa. Here, therefore, we find many invocations and petitions addressed to the spirits. Some of these petitions are very short. Sometimes nothing is said beyond the name of the spirits. They simply cry aloud, 'People of our house.' Sometimes they add, like angry children, what they want, 'People of our house! Cattle!' Sometimes there is a kind of barter. 'People of our house,' they say, 'I sacrifice these cattle to you, I pray for more cattle, more corn, and many children; then this your home will prosper, and many will praise and thank you.'

A belief in ancestral spirits or fathers leads on, very naturally, to a belief in a Father of all fathers, the Great Grandfather as he is sometimes called. He was known even to so low a race as that of the Hottentots, if we may trust Dr. Hahn, who has written down the following prayer from the mouth of a Hottentot friend of his:—

'Thou, O Tsui-goa,
Thou Father of Fathers,
Thou art our Father!
Let stream the thunder-cloud!
Let our flocks live!
Let us also live!
I am very weak indeed
From thirst, from hunger.
Oh, that I may eat the fruits of the field!

Art thou not our Father,
The Father of Fathers,
Thou, Tsui-goa?
Oh, that we may praise thee,
That we may give thee in return,
Thou Father of Fathers,
Thou, O Lord,
Thou, O Tsui-goa!'

This is not a bad specimen of a savage prayer; nay, it is hardly inferior to some of the hymns of the Veda and Avesta.

The negro on the Gold Coast, who used formerly to be classed as a mere fetish-worshipper, addresses his petitions neither to the spirits of the departed nor to his so-called fetish, but he prays, 'God, give me to-day rice and yams; give me slaves, riches; and health! Let me be brisk and swift!' When taking medicine, they say, 'Father-Heaven (Ζεῦ πάτερ)! bless this medicine which I take.' The negro on Lake Nyassa offers his deity a pot of beer and a basketful of meal, and cries out, 'Hear thou, O God, and send rain,' while the people around clap their hands and intone a prayer, saying, 'Hear thou, O God.'

The idea that the religion of these negro races consists of fetish-worship is wellnigh given up. It has been proved that nearly all of them address their prayers to a Supreme Deity, while these fetishes are no more than what a talisman or a horse-shoe would be with us. Oldendorp, a missionary of large experience in Africa, says:—

'Among all the black natives with whom I became acquainted, even the most ignorant, there is none who does not believe in God, give Him a name, and regard Him as a maker of the world. Besides this supreme beneficent deity, whom they all worship, they believed in many inferior gods, whose powers appear in serpents, tigers, rivers, trees, and stones. Some of them are

malevolent, but the negroes do not worship the bad or cruel gods: they only try to appease them by presents or sacrifices. They pray to the good gods alone. The daily prayer of a Watja negress was, "God, I know Thee not, but Thou knowest me. I need Thy help!"'

This is a prayer to which an Agnostic need not object.

A Roman Catholic Missionary, Father Loyer, who studied the habits of the natives of the Gold Coast, says the same.

'It is a great mistake,' he wrote, 'to suppose that the negroes regard the so-called fetishes as gods. They are only charms or amulets. The negroes have a belief in one powerful being, to whom they offer prayers. Every morning they wash in the river, put sand on their head to express their humility, and, lifting up their hands, ask their God to give them yams and rice and other blessings[1].'

So much for the prayers of races on the very lowest stage of civilization. Dr. Tylor, whose charming works on *Primitive Culture* we never consult in vain, tells us, 'that there are *many* races who distinctly admit the existence of spirits, but are not certainly known to pray to them, even in thought[2].' I doubt whether there are many; I confess I know of none; and we must remember that, in a case like this, negative evidence is never quite satisfactory. Still, on the other hand, Mr. Freeman Clarke seems to me to go too far when, in his excellent work on *The Ten Great Religions* (part ii, p. 222), he calls the custom of prayer and worship, addressed to invisible powers, a *universal* fact in the history of man. It may be so, but we are not yet able to prove it, and in these matters caution is certainly the better part

[1] Clarke, *Ten Religions*, ii. p. 110.
[2] *Primitive Culture*, ii. p. 330.

of valour. Nothing can well be lower in the scale of humanity than the Papuans. Yet the Papuans of Tanna offer the first-fruits to the ghosts of their ancestors, and their chief, who acts as a kind of high priest, calls out:—

'Compassionate Father! there is some food for you; eat it, and be kind to us on account of it!'

And this the whole assembly begins to shout together[1].

The Indians of North America stand decidedly higher than the Papuans; in fact, some of their religious ideas are so exalted that many students have suspected Christian influences[2]. The Osages, for instance, worship Wohkonda, the Master of Life, and they pray to him:—

'O Wohkonda, pity me, I am very poor; give me what I need; give me success against my enemies, that I may avenge the death of my friends. May I be able to take scalps, to take horses!'

John Tanner tells us that when the Algonquin Indians set out in their frail boats to cross Lake Superior, the canoes were suddenly stopped when about two hundred yards from land, and the chief began to pray in a loud voice to the Great Spirit, saying:—

'You have made this lake, and you have made us, your children; you can now cause that the water shall remain smooth, while we pass over in safety.'

He then threw some tobacco into the lake, and the other canoes followed his example. The Delawares invoke the Great Spirit above to protect their wives and children that they may not have to mourn for

[1] Compare Turner, *Polynesia*, p. 88; Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, ii. p. 336.

[2] M. M., *Introduction to the Science of Religion*, p. 195.

them. The Peruvians soar much higher in their prayers. M. Reville, in his learned work on the *Religion of Mexico*, tells us that prayers are very rare among the Peruvians. Mr. Brinton, on the contrary, in his *Myths of the New World*, p. 298, speaks of perfectly authentic prayers which had been collected and translated in the first generation after the conquest. One addressed to Viracocha Pachacamac is very striking, but here we can certainly perceive Christian influences, if only on the part of the translator:—

'O Pachacamac,' they say, 'thou who hast existed from the beginning and shalt exist unto the end, powerful and pitiful; who createdst man by saying, Let man be; who defendest us from evil, and preservest our life and health; art thou in the sky or in the earth, in the clouds or in the depths? Hear the voice of him who implores thee, and grant him his petitions. Give us life everlasting, preserve us, and accept this our sacrifice.'

The specimens of ancient Mexican prayers collected by Sahagun are very numerous, and some of them are certainly very thoughtful and even beautiful:—

'Is it possible,' says one of them, 'that this affliction is sent to us, not for our correction and improvement, but for our destruction?' Or, '0 merciful Lord, let this chastisement with which thou hast visited us, the people, be as those which a father or mother inflicts on their children, not out of anger, but to the end that they may be free from follies and vices.'

With regard to these Mexican prayers we must neither be too credulous nor too sceptical. Our first impulse is, no doubt, to suspect some influence of Christian missionaries, but when scholars who have made a special study of the South American literatures assure us that they are authentic, and go back to generations before the Spanish conquest, we must try to learn, as well as we can, the old lesson that God

has not left Himself without witness among any people. To me, I confess, this ancient Mexican literature, and the ancient Mexican civilization, as attested by architecture and other evidence of social advancement, have been a constant puzzle. In one sense it may be said that not even the negroes of Dahomey are more savage in their wholesale butcheries of human victims than the Mexicans seem to have been, according to their own confession. Not dozens, but hundreds, nay, thousands of human beings were slaughtered at one sacrifice, and no one seems to have seen any harm in it. The Spaniards assure us that they saw in one building 136,000 skulls, and that the annual number of victims was never less than 20,000. It was looked upon almost as an honour to be selected as a victim to the gods, and yet these people had the most exalted ideas of the Godhead, and at the time of the conquest they were in possession of really beautiful and refined poetry. There are collections of ancient Mexican poems, published in the original, with what professes to be a literal translation[1]. No doubt, whoever collected and wrote down these poems was a Spaniard and a Christian. Such words as *Dios* for God, *Angel* for angel, nay, even the names of *Christ* and the *Virgin Mary* occurring in the original poems, are clear evidence to that effect. But they likewise prove that no real fraud was intended. Some poems are professedly Christian, but the language, the thought, and the style of the majority of them seem to me neither Christian nor Spanish. I shall give a few specimens, particularly as some of them may really be called prayers:—

[1] *Ancient Poetry*, by Brinton, 1887.

'Where shall my soul dwell? Where is my home?
Where shall be my house? I am miserable on earth.
We wind and we unwind the jewels, the blue flowers are woven over the yellow ones, that we may give them to the children
Let my soul be draped in various flowers, let it be intoxicated by them; for soon must I weep, and go before the face of our mother.
This only do I ask: thou Giver of Life, be not angry, be not severe on earth, let us live with thee on earth, and take us to thy heavens.
But what can I speak truly here of the Giver of Life? We only dream, we are plunged in sleep. I speak here on earth, but never can we here on earth speak in worthy terms.
Although it may be jewels and precious ointments of speech, yet of the Giver of Life one can never speak here in worthy terms.'

Or again:—

'How much, alas! shall I weep on earth? Truly I have lived in vain illusion. I say that whatever is here on earth must end with our lives. May I be allowed to sing to thee, the Cause of all, there in the heaven, a dweller in thy mansion; then may my soul lift its voice and be seen with thee and near thee, thee by whom we live, ohuaya! ohuaya?'

There is a constant note of sadness in all these Mexican songs; the poet expresses a true delight in the beauty of nature, in the sweetness of life, but he feels that all must end; he grieves over those whom he will never see again among the flowers and jewels of this earth, and his only comfort is the life that is to come. That it was wrong to dispatch thousands of human beings rather prematurely to this life to come—nay, to feed on their flesh—seems never to have struck the mind of these sentimental philosophers. In one passage of these prayers the priest says:—

'Thou shalt clothe the naked and feed the hungry, for remember *their flesh is thine, and they are men like thee.*'

But the practical application of this commandment is seen in their sacrifices in all their ghastly hideousness.

All the prayers which we have hitherto examined belong to the lowest stage of civilization, and imply the very simplest relation between man and some unseen powers. If addressed to the ghosts of the departed, these invocations are not much more than a continuation of what might have passed between children and their parents while they were still alive. If addressed to the spirits of heaven or other prominent powers of nature, they are often but petulant, childish requests, or mean bargains between a slave and his master. Yet, with all this, they prove the existence of a belief in something beyond this finite world, something not finite, but infinite, something invisible, yet real. This belief is one of the many proofs that man is more than a mere animal, though I am well aware that believers in the so-called mental evolution of animals have persuaded themselves that animals also worship and pray. And what is their evidence? Certain monkeys in Africa, they say, turn every morning towards the rising sun, exactly like the Parsees or sun-worshippers. If they do not utter any sound, it is supposed that their feelings of reverence are too much for them; if they do not beg, it is, perhaps, because they know that the lilies of the field are clothed and fed without having to pray. It is no use arguing against such twaddle. It is perfectly true, however, that in many cases the unuttered prayer stands higher than the uttered prayer, and that there comes a time in the history of religion when prayer in the sense of begging is condemned. A silent inclination before the rising sun may lift the mind to a more sublime height than the most elaborate litany, but whether it is so in the case

of these monkeys who turn their faces to the rising sun, we must leave to Dr. Garnier to decide, who is now studying the language of the gorillas in Africa. I have often quoted the words of a poor Samoyede woman, who, when she was asked what her prayer was, replied: 'Every morning I step out of my tent and bow before the sun and say: "When thou risest, I too rise from my bed." And every evening I say: "When thou sinkest down, I too sink down to rest."' Even this utterance, poor as it may seem to us as a prayer, was to her a kind of religious worship. Every morning and evening it lifted her thoughts from earth to heaven, it expressed a silent conviction that her life was bound up with a higher life. Her not asking for anything, for any special favour, even for her daily bread, showed likewise somewhat of that wonderful trust that the fowls of the air are fed, though they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns.

We have hitherto examined the incipient prayers of uncivilized or semi-civilized races. For even the Mexicans and Peruvians, whose prayers and literature as well as their architectural remains point to what may be called civilization before their conquest by the Spaniards, stand nevertheless lower than many savages when we consider the whole[illegible] of human victims at [illegible] deniable traces

never appealed to as authorities. The most important among them are the religions of China, of India, of Persia, of Greece and Rome.

When we speak of the ancient religion of China, sometimes called Confucianism, we often forget that Confucius himself protests most strongly against being supposed to have been the author or founder of that religion. Again and again he says that he has only collected and restored the old faith. In the sacred books of China which he collected there are hardly any prayers. It is not till quite modern times that we meet with prayer as an essential part of public worship. It does not follow from this that the Chinese people at large were ignorant of private prayers, whether addressed to their ancestors, or to the gods of nature, or to the Supreme Spirit, in whom they believed; but it is curious to observe even in Confucius a certain reserve, a certain awe that would prevent any familiar intercourse between man and God. Thus he says: 'Reverence the spirits, but keep aloof from them.'

There is a curious prayer recorded as having been offered by an Emperor of China in the year 1538. It was on a memorable occasion when the name of the Supreme Deity was to be altered. The old name for God in China was *Tien*, which means heaven, just according to their etymology,

'I have offended

ring fo

Another name for spirit was *Ti*, and this name by itself, or with *Shang* prefixed, became the recognized name for God as the Supreme Spirit, used often in the same sentences as interchangeable with *Tien*[1]. When the appointed day came, the Emperor and his court assembled around the circular altar. First they prostrated themselves eleven times, and then addressed the Great Being as he who dissipated chaos and formed the heavens, earth, and man.

The proclamation was as follows :—

'I, the Emperor, have respectfully prepared this paper to inform the spirit of the sun, the spirit of the moon, the spirits of the five planets, of the stars, of the clouds, of the four seas, of the great rivers, of the present year, &c., that on the first of next month we shall reverently lead our officers and people to honour the great name of *Shang ti*. We inform you beforehand, O ye celestial and terrestrial spirits, and will trouble you on our behalf to exert your spiritual power, and display your vigorous efficacy, communicating our poor desire to *Shang ti*, praying him to accept our worship, and be pleased with the new title which we shall reverently present to him.'

We see here how the Chinese recognized, between man and the Supreme *Ti*, a number of intermediate spirits or *ti's*, such as the sun, moon, stars, seas, and rivers, who were to communicate the prayer of the Emperor to the Supreme Being. That prayer ran as follows :—

'Thou, O Ti, didst open the way for the form of matter to operate; thou, O Spirit, didst produce the beautiful light of the sun and moon, that all thy creatures might be happy.

Thou hast vouchsafed to hear us, O Ti, for thou regardest us as thy children. I, thy child, dull and ignorant, n poorly express my feelings. Honourable is thy great name.'

Then food was placed on the altar, first boiled meat,

[1] Legge, *Sacred Books of the East*, iii. p. 24.

and cups of wine, and Ti was requested to receive them with these words:—

'The Sovereign Spirit deigns to accept our offering. Give thy people happiness. Send down thy favour. All creatures are upheld by thy love. Thou alone art the parent of all things.

The service of song is now completed, but our poor sincerity cannot be expressed aright. The sense of thy goodness is in our heart. We have adored thee, and would unite with all spirits in honouring thy name. We place it on this sacred sheet of paper, and now put it in the fire, with precious silks, that the smoke may go up with our prayers to the distant blue heavens. Let all the ends of the earth rejoice in thy name.'

I doubt whether even in a Christian country any archbishop could produce a better official prayer. It is marked by deep reverence, but it also implies a belief that the close relationship between father and son exists between the Supreme Spirit and man. It is a hymn of praise rather than a prayer, and even when it asks for anything, it is only the divine favour.

When we now turn from China to the ancient religion of India, we find there a superabundance of prayers. The whole of the Rig-veda consists of hymns and prayers, more than a thousand; the Sâma-veda contains the same prayers again, as set to music, and the Yajur-veda contains verses and formulas employed at a number of ceremonial acts. Were these hymns spontaneous compositions, or were they composed simply and solely for the sake of the sacrifices, both public and private? There has lately been a long and somewhat heated controversy, carried on both by Aryan and Semitic scholars, as to the general question whether sacrifice comes first or prayer. It is one of those questions which may be argued *ad infinitum*, and which in the end pro-

duce the very smallest results. You remember how the Algonquins, when crossing Lake Superior, addressed certain prayers to Wohkonda, the Master of Life, and then threw a handful of tobacco into the lake. Now suppose we asked them the question, What was your first object? to throw tobacco into the lake or to invoke Wohkonda? What answer could they possibly give? Still that is the question which we are asked to answer in the name of the ancient poets of Vedic India.

Again, the Peruvian prayer addressed to Pachacamac is said to be recited at certain seasons. Suppose it was recited at a festival connected with the return of spring; we are asked once more, Was the festival instituted first, and then a prayer composed for the occasion, or was the prayer composed to express feelings of gratitude for the return of spring, and afterwards repeated at every spring festival?

No doubt, when we have such a case as the Emperor of China offering an official address to the Deity, we may be sure that the festival was ordained first and the official ode ordered afterwards; but even in such an advanced state of civilization, we never hear that the meat and the wine were placed on the altar by themselves and as an independent act, and without anything being said. On the contrary, they were placed there as suggested by the poem.

If, then, we find a Vedic hymn used at the full-moon or new-moon sacrifices, are we to suppose that the mysterious phases of the moon excited at first nothing but a mute libation of milk, and that at a later time only hymns were composed in praise of the solemn festival? That there are Vedic hymns

which presuppose a very elaborate ceremonial and a very complete priesthood, I was, I believe, the first to point out; but to say that all Vedic hymns were composed for ceremonial purposes is to say what cannot be proved. At a later time they may all have been included as part of the regular sacrifices, just as every psalm is read in church on appointed days. But we have only to look at some of the best-known Vedic hymns and prayers, and we shall soon perceive that they are genuine outpourings of personal feelings, which had not to wait for the call of an officiating priest before they could make their appearance. One poet says:—

'Let me not yet, O Varuṇa, enter into the house of clay' (the grave); 'have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!

If I go along trembling, like a cloud driven by the wind, have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!

Through want of strength, thou strong and bright god, have I gone to the wrong shore; have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!

Thirst came upon thy worshipper, though he stood in the midst of the waters; have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!

Whenever we men, O Varuṇa, commit an offence before the heavenly host, whenever we break thy law through thoughtlessness, have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!'

Now, I ask, had a poet to wait till a poem was wanted for a funeral service, or for the sacrifice of a horse, before he could compose such verses? Is there a single allusion to a priest, or to a sacrifice in them? That they, like the rest of the Rig-veda, may have been recited during certain ceremonies, who would deny? But if we see how verses from different hymns, and from different Maṇḍalas, or collections of hymns, have to be patched together before they become serviceable for sacrificial purposes, we can easily see that the hymns must have existed as poems before

they were used by the priests at certain sacrifices. Why should there have been a Rig-veda at all, that is to say, a collection of independent hymns, if the hymns had been composed simply to fit into the sacrificial ceremonial? The hymns and verses as fitted for that purpose are found collected in the Yagur and Sâma-vedas. What then was the object of collecting the ten books of the Rig-veda, most of them the heirlooms of certain old families, and not of different classes of priests? Then, again, there is what the Brahmanic theologians call *ûha*, that is, the slight modification of certain verses so as to make them serviceable at a sacrifice. Does not that show that they existed first as independent of ceremonial employment? However, the strongest argument is the character of the hymns themselves. As clearly as some, nay, a considerable number, of them were meant from the first to be used at well-established sacrifices, others were clearly unfit for that purpose. At what sacrifice could there be a call for the despairing song of a gambler, for the dialogue between Saramâ and the robbers, for the address of Visvâmitra to the rivers of the Penjâb, for the song of the frogs, or for the metaphysical speculations beginning with 'There was not nought, there was not ought'? As part of a sacred canon any verse of the Rig-veda might afterwards have been recited on solemn occasions, but the question is, Did the inspiration come from these solemn occasions, or did it come from the heart? It is extraordinary to see what an amount of ingenuity has been spent both by Vedic and Biblical scholars on this question of the priority of ceremonial or poetry! But what has been gained by it in the

end? For suppose that in Vedic India a completely mute ceremonial had reached as great a perfection and complication as the Roman Catholic ceremonial in our time, would that prove that no one could then or now have composed an Easter hymn or Christmas carol spontaneously, and without any reference to ecclesiastical employment? When there is so much real work to be done, why waste our time on disentangling such cobwebs?

When we consider that the Rig-veda contains more than a thousand hymns, you will understand how constant and intimate the intercourse must have been between the Vedic poets and their gods. Some of these hymns give us, no doubt, the impression of being artificial, and in that sense secondary and late, only we must not forget that what we call late in the Veda cannot well be later than 1000 B.C. Here are some more verses from a hymn addressed to Varuṇa, the god of the all-embracing sky, the Greek Ouranos:—

'However we break thy laws from day to day, men as we are, O god, Varuṇa,

Do not deliver us unto death, nor to the blow of the furious, nor to the wrath of the spiteful!

To propitiate thee, O Varuṇa, we unbend thy mind with songs, as the charioteer unties a weary steed.

When shall we bring hither the man who is victory to the warriors? when shall we bring Varuṇa the far-seeing to be propitiated?

He who knows the place of the birds that fly through the sky, who on the waters knows the ships;

He, the upholder of order, who knows the twelve months, with the offering of each, and knows the month that is engendered afterwards' (evidently the thirteenth or intercalary month):

'He who knows the track of the wind, the wide, the bright, the mighty, and knows those who reside on high;

He, the upholder of order, Varuṇa, sits down among his people; he, the wise, sits down to govern.

From thence, perceiving all wondrous things, he sees what has been and what will be.

May he, the wise, make our paths straight all our days; may he prolong our life!

Varuna, wearing golden mail, has put on his shining cloak, the spies sat down around him.' (Here you see mythology and anthropomorphism begin.)

'The god whom the scoffers do not provoke, nor the tormenters of men, nor the plotters of mischief;

He who gives to men glory, and not half glory, who gives it even to ourselves.

Yearning for him, the far-seeing, my thoughts move onward, as kine move to their pastures.

Let us speak together again, because my honey has been brought: that thou mayest eat what thou likest, like a friend.' (Now, here people would probably say that there is a clear allusion to a sacrificial offering of honey. But why should such an offering not be as spontaneous as the words which are uttered by the poet?)

'Did I see the god who is to be seen by all, did I see the chariot above the earth? He must have accepted my prayers.' (This implies a kind of vision, while the chariot may refer to thunder and lightning.)

'O hear this my calling, Varuna, be gracious now! Longing for help, I have called upon thee.

Thou, O wise god, art lord of all, of heaven and earth; hasten on thy way.

That I may live, take from me the upper rope, loose the middle, and remove the lowest.' (These ropes probably refer to the ropes by which a victim is bound. Here, however, they are likewise intended for the ropes of sin by which the poet, as he told us, felt himself chained and strangled.)

These translations are perfectly literal; they have not been modernized or beautified, and they certainly display before our eyes buried cities of thought and faith, richer in treasures than all the ruins of Egypt, of Babylon, or Nineveh.

Even what are called purely sacrificial hymns are by no means without a human interest. One of the earliest sacrifices consisted probably in putting a log of wood on the fire of the hearth. The fire was called

Agni, in Sanskrit, and we find the same name again, not indeed in Greek, but in the Latin *Ignis*. If any other gift was thrown into the fire the smoke seemed to carry it up to heaven, and thus Agni became the messenger and soon the mediator between men and gods. He was called the youngest among the gods, because he was new every morning. Here is a hymn addressed to him :—

'Agni, accept this log which I offer thee, accept this my service; listen well to these my songs.

With this log, O Agni, may we worship thee, the son of strength, conqueror of horses! and with this hymn, thou high-born!

May we, thy servants, serve thee with songs, O granter of riches, thou who lovest songs and delightest in riches.

Thou lord of wealth and giver of wealth, be thou wise and powerful; drive away from us the enemies!

He gives us rain from heaven, he gives us inviolable strength, he gives us food a thousandfold.

Youngest of the gods, their messenger, their invoker, most deserving of worship, come, at our praise, to him who worships thee and longs for thy help.

For thou, O sage, goest wisely between these two creations' (heaven and earth, gods and men), 'like a friendly messenger between two hamlets.

Thou art wise, and thou hast been pleased: perform thou, intelligent Agni, the sacrifice without interruption, sit down on this sacred grass.'

That this hymn contains what may be called secondary ideas, that it requires the admission of considerable historical antecedents, is clear enough. Agni is no longer a mere visible fire, he is the invisible agent in the fire; he has assumed a certain dramatic personality; he is represented as high-born, as the conqueror of horses, as wealthy and as the giver of wealth, as the messenger between men and gods. Why Agni, the fire, should be called the giver of rain is not quite clear, but it is explained by the fire

ascending in a cloud of smoke, and by the cloud sending down the prayed-for rain. The sacred grass on which Agni is invited to sit down is the pile of grass on the hearth or the altar of the house which surrounds the fire, and the log of wood is the fuel to keep the fire burning. All this shows an incipient ceremonial which becomes more and more elaborate, but there is no sign that it had begun to fetter the wings of poetical inspiration.

The habit of praying, both in private and in public, continued through all the periods of the history of Indian religion. One phase only has to be excepted, that of Buddhism, and this will have to be considered when we examine what are called *individual* in contradistinction to *national* religions. We need not dwell here on those later prayers of the Brahmans, which we find scattered about in the epic poems, in the Purâ*n*as, and in the more modern sects established in every part of the country. They are to us of inferior interest, though some of them are decidedly beautiful and touching.

According to Schopenhauer every prayer addressed to an objective deity is idolatrous. But it is important to remark how much superior the idolatry of prayer is to the idolatry of temple-worship. In India, more particularly, the statues and images of their popular gods are hideous, owing to their unrestrained symbolism and the entire disregard of a harmony with nature. Yet the prayers addressed to Śiva and Durgâ are almost entirely free from these blemishes, and often show a concept of Deity of which we ourselves need not be ashamed.

Nor need we dwell long on the prayers of the

ancient Greeks and Romans, because they are well known from classical literature. We know how Priam prays before he sets out on his way to the Greek camp to ask for the body of his son. We know how Nestor prays for the success of the embassy sent to Achilles, and how Ulysses offers prayers before approaching the camp of the Trojans. We find in Homer *penitential prayers*, to confess sins and to ask for forgiveness; *bidding prayers*, to ask for favours; and *thanksgiving prayers*, praising the gods for having fulfilled the requests addressed to them. We never hear, however, of the Greeks kneeling at prayer. The Greeks seem to have stood up while praying, and to have lifted up their hands to heaven, or stretched them forth to the earth. Before praying it was the custom to wash the hands, just as the Psalmist says (xxvi. 6): 'I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass Thine altar, O Lord.'

That prayer, not only public, but private also, was common among the Greeks we may learn from Plato when he says that children hear their mothers every day eagerly talking with the gods in the most earnest manner, beseeching them for blessings. He also states, in another place, that every man of sense before beginning any important work will ask help of the gods. Men quite above the ordinary superstitions of the crowd, nay, men suspected of unbelief, were known to pray to the gods. Thus Pericles is said, before he began his orations, always to have prayed to the gods for power to do a good work. May I mention here what I have not seen mentioned elsewhere, and what the widow of Sir Robert Peel told Baron Bunsen, who told it me, that on the day

when Peel was going to deliver his decisive speech on Free Trade, she found him in his dressing-room on his knees praying, before going to Parliament.

Most impressive are some of the prayers composed by Greek thinkers, whose religion was entirely absorbed in philosophy, but whose dependence on a higher power remained as unshaken as that of a child. What can be more reverent and thoughtful than the prayer of Simplicius, at the end of his commentary on Epictetus:—

'I beseech Thee, O Lord, the Father, Guide of our reason, to make us mindful of the noble origin Thou hast thought worthy to confer upon us; and to assist us to act as becomes free agents; that we may be cleansed from the irrational passions of the body, and may subdue and govern the same, using them as instruments in a fitting manner; and to assist us to the right direction of the reason that is in us, and to its participation in what is real by the light of truth. And thirdly, I beseech Thee, my Saviour, entirely to remove the darkness from the eyes of our souls, in order that we may know aright, as Homer says, both God and men.' (Farrar, *Paganism and Christianity*, p. 44.)

Equally wise are the words of Epictetus himself (*Discourses*, ii. p. 16):—

'Dare to look up to God and say: Do with me henceforth as Thou wilt. I am of one mind with Thee, I am Thine. I decline nothing that seems good to Thee. Send me whither Thou wilt. Clothe me as Thou wilt. Wilt Thou that I take office or live a private life, remain at home or go into exile, be poor or rich, I will defend Thy purpose with me in respect of all these.'

The Romans were more religious and more prayerful than the Greeks, but they were less fluent in expressing their sentiments. It is very characteristic that the Romans, when praying, wrapped the toga round their heads, so that they might be alone with their god, undisturbed by the sights of the outer world. That tells more than many a long prayer. That in praying

they turned the palms of their hands backward and upward to heaven, shows that the Romans wished to surrender themselves entirely to the will and pleasure of their gods. In later times the Romans became the pupils of the Greeks in their religious as well as in their philosophical views, so that when we read a prayer of Seneca it is difficult to say whether it breathes Greek or Roman thought. Seneca prays (Clarke, *The Great Religions*, p. 233):—

'We worship and adore the framer and former of the universe; governor, disposer, keeper; Him on whom all things depend; mind and spirit of the world; from whom all things spring; by whose spirit we live; the divine spirit, diffused through all; God all-powerful; God always present; God above all other gods; thee we worship and adore.'

The religion of the Assyrians and Babylonians, as far as we know it from inscriptions, must likewise be classed as one of the national religions, whose founders are unknown. Many of their prayers have been deciphered and translated, but one almost hesitates to quote them or to build any theories on them, because these translations change so very rapidly from year to year. Here is a specimen of an Assyrian prayer, assigned to the year 650 B.C.:—

'May the look of pity that shines in thine eternal face dispel my griefs.

May I never feel the anger and wrath of the God.

May my omissions and my sins be wiped out.

May I find reconciliation with him, for I am the servant of his power, the adorer of the great gods.

May thy powerful face come to my help; may it shine like heaven, and bless me with happiness and abundance of riches.

May it bring forth in abundance, like the earth, happiness and every sort of good.'

If this is a correct translation, it shows much deeper feelings and much more simplicity of thought than

the ordinary Babylonian prayers, which have been translated by some of the most trusted of Cuneiform scholars. They are so very stiff and formal, and evidently the work of an effete priesthood, rather than of sincere believers in visible or invisible gods. Here follows one short specimen:—

'O my God, who art violent (against me), receive (my supplication).
O my Goddess, thou who art fierce (towards me), accept (my prayer).
Accept my prayer (may thy liver be quieted).
O my Lord, long-suffering (and) merciful (may thy heart be appeased).
By day, directing unto death that which destroys me, O my God, interpret (the vision).
O my Goddess, look upon me and accept my prayer.
May my sin be forgiven, may my transgression be cleansed.
Let the yoke be unbound, the chain be loosed.
May the seven winds carry away my groaning.
May I strip off my evil so that the bird bear (it) up to heaven.
May the fish carry away my trouble, may the river carry (it) along.
May the reptile of the field receive (it) from me; may the waters of the river cleanse me as they flow.
Make me shine as a mask of gold.
May I be precious in thy sight as a goblet of glass.'

You see how advanced and artificial the surroundings are in which the thoughts of these Babylonian prayers move. There are cities and palaces, and golden masks and goblets of glass, of all of which we see, of course, no trace in really ancient or primitive prayers, such as those of the Veda.

We have now even Accadian prayers, older than those of Nineveh or Babylon, but even they smell of temples and incense rather than of the fresh air of the morning.

A more simple Accadian prayer is the following:—

'God, my Creator, stand by my side,
Keep thou the door of my lips, guard thou my hands,
O Lord of Light.'

The following recommendation to pray is also remarkable:—

'Pray thou, pray thou! Before the couch, pray!
Before the dawn is light, pray! By the tablets and books, pray!
By the hearth, by the threshold, at the sun-rising,
At the sun-setting, pray[1]!'

We enter into a different atmosphere when we step into the ruined temples of Egypt. Here, too, the thoughts strike us as the outcome of many periods of previous thought, but they possess a massiveness and earnestness which appeal to our sympathy. Here is a specimen:—

'Hail to thee, maker of all beings, Lord of law, Father of the Gods; maker of men, creator of beasts; Lord of grains, making food for the beasts of the field.... The One alone without a second. ... King alone, single among the Gods; of many names, unknown is their number.

I come to thee, O Lord of the Gods, who has existed from the beginning, eternal God, who hast made all things that are. Thy name be my protection; prolong my term of life to a good age; may my son be in my place (after me); may my dignity remain with him (and his) for ever, as is done to the righteous, who is glorious in the house of the Lord.

Who then art thou, O my father Amon? Doth a father forget his son? Surely a wretched lot awaiteth him who opposes Thy will; but blessed is he who knoweth thee, for thy deeds proceed from a heart of love. I call upon thee, my father Amon! behold me in the midst of many peoples unknown to me; all nations are united against me, and I am alone; no other is with me. My many warriors have abandoned me, none of my horsemen hath looked towards me; and when I called them, none hath listened to my voice. But I believed that Amon is worth more to me than a million of warriors, than a hundred thousand horsemen, and ten thousands of brothers and sons, even were they all gathered together. The work of many men is nought, Amon will prevail over them.'

[1] W. Tallack, *The Inward Light and Christ's Incarnation*, p. 4.

This is a prayer full of really human feelings, and it therefore reminds us of ever so many passages in other prayers. The desire that the son may outlive the father, or that the older people may not weep over the younger, meets us in a hymn of the Veda when the poet asks—as who has not asked?—that 'the gods may allow us to die in order so that the old may not weep over the young.'

The idea that the help of Amon is better than a thousand horsemen is re-echoed in many a psalm, as when we read (Ps. cxviii. 9, 10), 'It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes. All nations compassed me about: but in the name of the Lord will I destroy them.'

If we now turn our eyes from what we called *ethnic* and *national* religions to those religions which claim to be the work of an individual founder, and are therefore called *individual* religions, we must not imagine that they really came ready made out of the brain of a single person. If the name *individual* religion is used in that sense, the term would be misleading, for every religion, like every language, carries with it an enormous amount of accumulated thought which the individual prophet may reshape and revive, but which he could not possibly create from the beginning. The great individual religions are *Zoroastrianism*, *Mosaism*, *Christianity*, *Mohammedanism*, and *Buddhism*. They are all called after the name of their supposed founders, and the fact that they can appeal to a personal authority imparts to them, no doubt, a peculiar character. But if we take the case of Moses, the religion which he is supposed to have founded sprang from a Semitic soil

prepared for centuries for the reception of his doctrines. We know now that even such accounts as that of the Creation, the Fall of Man, the Deluge, and the Tower of Babel have their parallels in the clay tablets of Assyria, as deciphered by George Smith and others, and that as there is a general Semitic type of language which Hebrew shares in common with Babylonian, Arabic, and Syriac, there is likewise a general type of Semitic religion which forms the common background of all. In the case of Christianity, we know that Christ came not to destroy, but to fulfil; and in the case of Mohammedanism we may safely say that without Judaism and without Christianity it would never have sprung into existence. The ancient religion of Persia, which is called Zoroastrianism, after its reputed author, is in many respects a continuation, in some a reform, of the more ancient Vedic religion; and exactly the same applies to Buddhism, which has all its roots, even those with which it breaks, in the earlier religion of the Brahmans. In one sense, therefore, I quite admit that the classification into ethnic, national, and individual religions may be misleading, unless it is carefully defined.

The first individual religion in India is Buddhism, which sprang from Brahmanism, though on many points it stands in opposition to it. This is particularly the case with regard to prayer. There comes a time in the life of religions as in the life of individuals when prayer in the sense of importunate asking and begging for favours and benefits has to cease, and when its place is taken by the simple words, 'Thy will be done.' But in Buddhism there are, as we shall see, even stronger reasons why prayer

in the ordinary sense of the word had to be surrendered. I had some years ago two Buddhist priests staying with me at Oxford. They had been sent from Japan, which alone contains over thirty millions of Buddhists, to learn Sanskrit at Oxford. As there was no one to teach them the peculiar Sanskrit of the Buddhists, and I did not like their going away to a German university, I offered them my services. Of course, we had many discussions, and I remember well their strong disapprobation of prayer, in the sense of petitioning. They belonged to the Mahâyâna Buddhism, and though they did not believe in a Supreme Deity or a creator of the world, they believed in a kind of deified Buddha, while the Hînayâna Buddhists think of their Buddha as neither existent nor non-existent. The Mahâyânists adore their Buddha, they worship him, they meditate on him, they hope to meet him face to face in Paradise, in Sukhâvatî. But such was their reverence for Buddha, and such was their firm belief in the eternal order of the world, or in the working of Karma, that it seemed to them the height of impiety to pray, and to place their personal wishes before Buddha. I asked one of them whether, if he saw his child dying, he would not pray for its life, and he replied, No, he could not; it would be wrong, because it would show a want of faith! 'And yet,' I said to him, 'you Buddhists have actually prayer-wheels. What do you consider the use of them?'

'O no,' he said, 'those are not prayer-wheels; they only contain the names and praises of Buddha, but we ask for nothing in return.'

'But,' I said, 'are not some of these wheels driven

by the wind like a wind-mill, others by a river like a water-mill?'

My friend looked somewhat ashamed at first. But he soon recovered himself, and said—

'After all, they remind people of Buddha, the law, and the Church, and if that can be done by machines driven by wind or water, is it not better than to employ human beings who, to judge from the way in which they rattle off their prayers in your chapels, seem sometimes to be degraded to mere praying-wheels?'

But while we look in vain for bidding prayers in the sacred literature of the Buddhists, we find in it plenty of meditations on the Buddha and the Buddhas, on saints, past and future. While Pallas (ii. p. 168) tells us that the Buddhists in Mongolia have not even a word for prayer, he gives us (ii. p. 386) specimens which in other religions would certainly be included under that name[1].

'Thou, in whom innumerable creatures believe, thou Buddha, conqueror of the hosts of evil! Thou, omniscient above all beings, come down to our world! Made perfect and glorified in innumerable bygone revolutions; always pitiful, always gracious, lo, now is the right time to confer loving blessings on all creatures! Bless us from thy throne, which is firmly established on a truly divine doctrine, with wonderful benefits! Thou, the eternal redeemer of all creatures, incline thy face with thy immaculate company towards our kingdom! In faith we bow before thee. Thou the perfecter of eternal welfare, dwelling in the reign of tranquillity, rise and come to us, Buddha and Lord of all blessed rest!'

Very different from Buddhism with regard to prayer is Zoroastrianism. It encourages prayer in every form, whether addressed to the Supreme Spirit,

[1] Koeppen, *Religion des Buddha*, i. p. 555.

Ahuramazda, or to subordinate deities. All that we know of ancient Zoroastrian literature is, in fact, more or less liturgical and full of prayers, whether actual petitions or hymns of praise, or confessions of sin or expressions of gratitude for favours received. Some of these prayers belong to the most ancient period of Zend literature, and are in consequence difficult to interpret. In giving a translation of the following specimens, I have availed myself of the most recent and most valuable work on the Yasna by M. Darmesteter:—

1. 'This I ask thee, tell me the truth, O Ahura! Fulfil my desire as I fulfil yours, O Mazda! I wish to resemble thee, and teach my friends to resemble thee, in order to give thee pious and friendly help. O to be with Vohu Manô! (the good spirit).

2. This I ask thee, tell me the truth, O Ahura! What is the first of things in the world of good, the good which fulfils the desires of him who pursues it? For he who is friend to thee, O Mazda, always changes evil to good, and rules spiritually in both worlds.

3. This I ask thee, tell me the truth, O Ahura! Who was the creator, the first father of Asha (Right)? Who has opened a way for the sun and the stars? Who makes the moon to wax and wane? These are the things and others which I wish to know, O Mazda!

4. This I ask thee, tell me the truth, O Ahura! Who without supports has kept the earth from falling? Who has made the waters and the plants? Who has set winds and clouds to run quickly? Who is the creator of Vohu Manô, O Mazda?

5. This I ask thee, tell me the truth, O Ahura! What good artist has made light and darkness? What good artist has made sleep and waking? Who has made the dawn, noon, and night? Who has made the arbiter of justice?

6. This I ask thee, tell me the truth, O Ahura! Who has created with Khshathra (royal power) aspiration for perfect piety? Who has placed love in the heart of a father when he obtains a son? I wish to help thee powerfully, O Mazda, O beneficent spirit, creator of all things!'—(From *Gatha Ushtavaiti*, Darmesteter, Yasna, p. 286.)

And again:—

1. 'Towards what country shall I turn? Where shall I go to offer my prayer? Relations and servants leave me. Neither my neighbours nor the wicked tyrants of the country wish me well. How shall I succeed in satisfying thee, O Mazda Ahura?

2. I see that I am powerless, O Mazda! I see that I am poor in flocks, poor in men. I cry to thee, look at me, O Ahura! I expect from thee that happiness which friend gives to friend. To the teaching of Vohu Manô (belongs) the fortune of Asha.

3. When will come to us the increasers of days? When will the thoughts of the saints (the Saoshyants) arise, in order to support by their works and their teaching the good world? To whom will Vohu Manô come for prosperity? As to me, O Lord, I desire thy instruction.

4. In the district and in the country the wicked prevents the workers of holiness from offering the cow, but the violent man will perish by his own acts. Whoever, O Mazda, can prevent the wicked from ruling and oppressing makes wise provision for the flocks.'—(From *Gatha Ushtavaiti*, Darmesteter, Yasna, p. 30.)

In the Zoroastrian religion prayer is no longer left to the sudden impulses of individuals. It has become part of the general religious worship, part of the constant fight against the powers of darkness and evil, in which every Zoroastrian is called upon to join. A person who neglects these statutable prayers, whether priest or layman, commits a sin. Every Parsi has to say his prayer in the morning and in the evening, besides the prayers enjoined before each meal, and again at the time of a birth, a marriage, or a death. Three times every day the Parsi has to address a prayer to the sun in his various stations, while the priest, who has to rise at midnight, has four such prayers to recite. These three prayers, at sunrise, at noon, and at sunset, and possibly at midnight, were not unknown to the people of the Veda, and they became more and more fixed in later times.

Mohammed gave great prominence to prayer as an

outward form of religion. After the erection of the first mosque at Medinah he ordained the office of the crier or muezzin, who from the tower had to call the faithful five times every day to the recital of their prayers. The muezzin cried:—

'God is great! (four times). I bear witness that there is no god but God (twice). I bear witness that Mohammed is the Apostle of God (twice). Come hither to prayers (twice). Come hither to salvation (twice). God is great. There is no other god but God.'

In the early morning the crier adds:—

'Prayer is better than sleep.'

The five times for this official prayer are:—(1) Between dawn and sunrise. (2) After the sun has begun to decline. (3) Midway between this. (4) Shortly after sunset. (5) At nightfall.

These prayers are *farz*, or incumbent; all others are *nafl*, supererogatory, or *sunnah*, in accordance with the practices of the prophet.

Besides these public prayers, private devotions are often recommended by Mohammed, but we possess few specimens of these personal prayers. Mohammed, when speaking of the birds in the air, says that each one knoweth its prayer and its praise, and God knoweth what they do. He recommends his followers to be instant in prayer and almsgiving. 'When the call to prayer soundeth on the day of congregation (Friday), then hasten to remember God,' he says, 'and abandon business; that is better for you, if ye only knew; and when prayer is done, disperse in the land, and seek of the bounty of God.' The following may serve as a specimen of a simple Mohammedan prayer. It has sometimes been called Mohammed's *Paternoster*:—

'Praise be to God, the Lord of the Worlds!
The compassionate, the merciful!
King of the day of judgement!
Thee we worship, and Thee we ask for help.
Guide us in the straight way,
The way of those to whom Thou art gracious,
Not of those upon whom is Thy wrath, nor of the erring!'

The only two of the individual religions whose prayers we have not yet examined are the Jewish and Christian, and they are so well known that little need be said about them here. Little of any importance is said in the Old Testament about ceremonial prayer, as a recognized part of the public religious service, but private prayer is everywhere taken for granted. When we read in Isa. i. 15, 'And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear,' this seems to refer to public rather than to private prayers (δημοσία). At a later time we find among the Jews, as among Persians, Brahmans, and Egyptians also, certain times fixed for prayer, generally morning, noon, and evening. This is so natural a thought that there is no need to imagine that one nation borrowed the twofold, threefold, or even the fourfold prayer from another. The Jews were generally, like the Greeks, standing while saying their prayers, but we also hear of cases where they bent their knees, threw themselves on the ground, lifted up their hands, smote their breasts, or in deep mourning placed their head between their knees. The proper place for private prayer was the small chamber in the house, but we know how, when prayer had become purely ceremonial, pious people loved to pray standing in the synagogues and the

corners of the streets. The Hebrew Psalms, most of which are prayers, stand out quite unique among the prayers of the world by their simplicity, their power, and majesty of language, though, like all collections of prayers, the collection of the Psalms too contains some which we could gladly spare. There are other prayers put into the mouth of Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, and other prominent characters by the authors of the historical books of the Old Testament, but hardly one of them approaches the highest standard of the Psalms. In substance the prayer of Elijah, for instance, is but little superior to the prayer of the priests of Baal, and the slaughter of the priests of Baal by Elijah's own hand, after his prayer had been granted, seems indeed more worthy of a priest of Baal than of the priest and prophet of the all-merciful Jehovah. Some of the private prayers of the Jews have been preserved in the Talmud. They are very beautiful, and the Rabbis often pride themselves on being able to match every petition of the Lord's prayer in the Talmud. Why should they not? People who are at all inclined to pray have all much the same to say, so much so that there are few prayers in the Sacred Books of the non-Christian religions in which, with certain restrictions, a Christian is not able to join with perfect sincerity. The language changes, but the heart remains the same. We do not deny that there is progress, that there is what is called evolution, or, more correctly, historical continuity, in the different religions of the world. Another important element is the parallelism of various religions, which helps us to understand what is obscure and seemingly without antecedents in one

religion by the fuller light derived from others. So powerful is the stream of religious development that it often seems to land our boat on the very opposite shore from where it started. While the ancient prayers seem to say, Let *our* will be done, the last and final prayer of the world is, Let *Thy* will be done. And yet we can watch every step by which the human mind or the human heart changed from the one prayer to the other. Here it is where an historical or comparative study of religions bears its most precious fruit. It teaches the followers of different religions to understand each other, and if we can but understand each other, we can more easily bear with each other. My Buddhist pupil would not pray even for the life of his child. What did he mean by this, if not, '*Thy* will be done'? Many a Christian mother will say, '*Thy* will be done,' yet she will add complainingly, 'If Thou hadst been here, he would not have died.'

# INDIAN FABLES

## AND ESOTERIC BUDDHISM [1].

NO country has, I believe, suffered so much from what are called 'travellers' tales' as India. Before it had been discovered or invaded by Alexander the Great, it seemed to the rest of the world surrounded by a halo of fable and mystery. And even after it had been brought within the horizon of other nations of antiquity, it still continued to be looked upon as a land of wonders and fairy-tales. Almost anything that was told of its natural products, or of the primaeval wisdom of its inhabitants, was readily believed, repeated, and even exaggerated by successive writers. The ancient Greek writers knew really very little about India, but almost all they have to say of it bears this mysterious and marvellous stamp.

Homer probably knew nothing about India. If some scholars hold that his twofold *Ethiopians* were meant for the inhabitants of India, all we can say is, that, like so many other things, it is possible, but that, from the very nature of the case, it can neither be proved nor disproved. The Homeric name *Aithiops* is no doubt connected with *aitho* = 'to burn,' and may have been meant originally for people with burnt or dark faces, while *aithops*, as applied to metal and

[1] *Nineteenth Century*, May, 1893.

wine, may be translated by 'fiery' or 'ruddy.' Knowing that India was the richest source of fables, which in later times were spread over the whole world, Welcker[1] has put forward a conjecture that *Aísôpos*, the fabulous inventor of fables, was originally *Aíthôpos*, a black man, possibly from India. The change of *th* into *s* is, no doubt, irregular, but, with all respect for the sacredness of phonetic laws, we ought not to shut our eyes to the fact that in proper names, and more particularly in names of mythology and fable, anomalies and local dialectic varieties occur which would not be tolerated in ordinary words. The change of *th* into *s* would be perfectly legitimate, for instance, in the Aeolic[2] and in the Doric[3] dialects, and it can easily be understood how a proper name, formed according to the phonetic rules of one dialect, might be taken over and remain unchanged in others, even if their phonetic laws were different.

In Germany, for instance, if a man is called *Schmidt* at Berlin, he would not be called *Smid* at Hamburg, nor should we call him *Smith* in England. We call the composer *Wagner*, not *Waggoner*. If, therefore, the old fable poet *Aíthôpos* became first known in Greece under his Aeolic name of *Aísôpos*, there would have been little inducement to change his name back into *Aíthôpos*. This is a consideration that has been far too much neglected in the treatment of mythological and other proper names, and there is no phonetic bar against *Aesôpos* having meant originally the same as *Aithiops*, burnt or dark-faced. If we might go a step further, and take *Aithiops* as an old name of the inhabitants of India or the far East, this would, no

[1] *Rhein. Mus.*, vi. p. 366 seq. [2] *Ahrens*, § 36, 2. [3] Ibid. § 7.

doubt, be a great help in enabling us to account for the presence of certain fables in Greece which are nearly identical with ancient fables in India, but occur in Greek literature long before Alexander's expedition had opened a road for intellectual and literary intercourse between India and Greece. It is a well-established fact that many of our fables, more particularly the animal fables, had their cradle in India, and were exported on well-known historical high roads from the East to the West. But there are some which, unless we claim them as common Aryan property, or as the natural outcome of our common humanity, must somehow have found their way from India to Persia and Greece, long before a Greek soldier had set foot on the sacred soil of Âryâvarta.

We find[1], for instance, that Plato, when speaking of all the gold that goes into Sparta, while nothing comes out of it, shows himself perfectly familiar with the Aesopian myth or fable—*κατὰ τὸν Αἰσώπου μῦθον*—of the fox declining to enter the lion's cave because he saw how all the footsteps went into the cave but none came out of it. The same old fable appears in the Sanskrit Pañkatantra, only told there of a jackal instead of a fox. If the Aesopian fables had come from India, this coincidence would be accounted for, though, of course, the Pañkatantra, in which it is found, is only a modern collection of far more ancient Indian fables. But we must never forget that what is possible in one place is possible in other places also. The observation of footprints going into a cave and none coming out of it was one that could hardly have escaped shepherds and hunters in any country, and

[1] *Select Essays*, i. 509.

we actually find the same application of *nulla vestigia retrorsum* in a fable related by the Kaffirs in South Africa.

Plato seems well acquainted also with the fable of the donkey in a lion's skin[1]. The Greek proverb ὄνος παρὰ Κυμαίους seems to be applied to men boasting before people who have no means of knowing their character or testing their statements. It presupposes the existence of some kind of fable of a donkey appearing in a lion's skin. In the Pañkatantras the fable is told of a dyer who, being too poor to feed his donkey, put a tiger's skin over him and sent him into his neighbour's field. Here he browsed unmolested till one day he saw a female donkey. Thereupon the disguised tiger began to bray, and the owner of the field, now summoning up courage, came and killed him.

Here the coincidences are so minute that one feels more inclined to admit an actual borrowing, always supposing that Aesop could have introduced some of the Eastern fables from India to the Greeks of Asia Minor before the time of Alexander the Great.

After Homer's time, the first Greek traveller, or rather sailor, who knew anything about India from personal experience was Skylax, who, at the command of Darius, undertook his voyage of discovery to the mouth of the Indus about 509 B.C. Unfortunately the account of his expedition which he is said to have written is lost to us, but Hekataeos of Miletos, who died in 486 B.C., knew it and relied on it in his own account of India.

This work of Hekataeos too is lost, but it served as

[1] *Kratyl* p. 411.

an authority to Herodotus, who in what he has to say of India relies chiefly on him and on the information which he himself could gain from people in Persia.

Herodotus tells us the first *traveller's tale* about India. A traveller's tale, however, need not be an intentional falsehood. Travellers' tales arise from very different sources. There is in many people an irresistible tendency not only to admire, but also to magnify. This may be called a very pardonable weakness. It is quite right that we should never lose the power of admiring; it is quite right that we should always look up to things and to men also, and have eyes for what is great and noble in them rather than for what is small and mean. A traveller who has lost the gift of admiring would far better stay at home. But we may admire and yet praise with discrimination and moderation. There are people with whom everything is grand, awfully grand, tremendous, colossal, or, as the French say, *pyramidal*; in fact, to use a more homely expression, all their geese are swans. I do not speak of people who admire because what they admire is somehow connected with themselves. When parents admire their children or grandchildren, when teachers praise their pupils, when every one declares his own college, it may be, his own boat, his own university, his own country, the best in the world, we may call it parental love, appreciation of rising merit, loyalty and patriotism, and all the rest, though in the end we cannot help suspecting that there is in all this a minute dash of selfishness.

But even apart from all selfish motives, there are people who cannot resist giving a high colouring to

all they have seen or heard, who delight in the marvellous, if only to make people stare, and who enjoy that subtle sense of superiority which arises from having seen or heard what nobody else has seen or is ever likely to see or hear. Nearly all ghost stories of which we hear so much at present arise, I believe, from that source. We all know perfectly well that no one has ever seen a ghost; for a ghost that can be seen, that is, produce vibrations which impinge on our eyes, must be something material, and ceases *ipso facto* to be a ghost. But there seems to be something distinguished and aristocratic in having seen a ghost. It is like having been presented to the Pope or the Sultan, or like having seen the sea-serpent. To express any doubt or to attempt anything like cross-examination is considered as almost rude, if not unorthodox. Here lies the real danger of travellers, and here is one source of what we call travellers' tales. But there is another source, namely simple misapprehension. Unless a traveller is familiar with the language of the people whom he undertakes to describe, misunderstandings are inevitable. We all know the mistakes which Frenchmen make when describing the manners and customs of the English, and if we have our laugh at them, we may be quite sure that they have their laugh at us. I remember a distinguished friend of mine whose book on England has become classical in France, expressing his surprise to me that his English landlady had brought him a beef-steak with buttered toast. To him this was but another proof of the low state of culinary art in England. The fact was, the poor woman had taken his pronunciation of the word *potatoes* for *buttered*

*toast*, and had carried out his orders as well as she could, *au pied de la lettre*. If that happens in our days of free international intercourse, how much more must an ancient Greek, when travelling alone in Egypt or Persia, have been liable to misunderstand what he heard and saw, and what could hardly be explained to him except by signs and gestures? Nor must we forget that there are people who take a mischievous pleasure in telling strangers what is supposed to amuse them, but what they are hardly intended to believe. If a Frenchman were to ask an Englishman whether husbands may still sell their wives in Smithfield market, I should not be at all surprised if, from sheer delight in mischief, he were told by some wag to go to the market and convince himself of the cruelty of the English law and of English husbands. It happened to me only the other day that a most intelligent German professor, who had been dining in several colleges, assured me that in Oxford men and women went about in the streets ringing a bell to summon the undergraduates from the streets to their dinners in Hall. Some friend had told him so, he had carefully entered it in his note-book, and I had the greatest difficulty in persuading him that he had been chaffed, and that the men who rang the bell in the streets were simply trying to sell the *Oxford Times*. Men were much the same thousands of years ago as they are now, and there is no disrespect in supposing that what happened to a German professor in Oxford might have happened to Herodotus in Egypt or to Ctesias in Persia.

Herodotus was not himself in India, nor had he any books on India which he could have consulted except

those of Skylax and Hekataeus. But though he did not reach India he was in Persia, and Persia and India were such near neighbours that there were probably many commercial travellers from India in Persia, and from Persia in India. Certainly some of the things he tells us about India sound very much like stories of commercial travellers, possibly misunderstood by Herodotus himself, or palmed off on him by a waggish fellow traveller. He probably asked how it came to pass that India was so rich in gold, and he was told (iii. 102) that in the desert north of Kashmir there were ants larger than foxes, who dug up the gold. He believed it. How an animal can be an ant with six legs, and yet as large as a fox with four legs, he does not explain. Some of these ants, however, he tells us, and had probably been told so himself, were caught and brought to Persia. These fox-like ants, or ant-like foxes, he says, make themselves dwellings beneath the earth, and in doing so dig up the sand, which is full of gold. In order to collect this gold the Indians tie three camels together, a female in the middle, one that has just had a foal, and two males on each side. The rider sits on the female camel, and after he has filled his bags with gold he rides away full gallop, followed by the ants, who, it seems, want to recover their gold. The female camel, wishing to get home to her young one, runs so fast that the rider escapes from the pursuit of the ants, and brings home his bags full of gold.

Many explanations have been proposed of these ants. A recent traveller suggested that the ants were simply the inhabitants of the country who lived in caves and were clothed in a peculiar way. But many

years ago, in 1843 [1], Professor Wilson had called attention to the gold mentioned in the Mahâbhârata, and brought as tribute to Yudhish*th*ira from the Tibetan borderlands. This gold is called in Sanskrit *ant-gold*, because it is dug up by ants which are called *pipîlikas* in Sanskrit [2].

Now here we clearly see that the poet of the Mahâbhârata believed that the so-called ant-gold was dug up by ants. Everything else must have been added by the Indians who told the Persians, or by the Persians who told Herodotus. But we may go even a step further. Pipîlika, or ant-gold, need not have meant gold dug up by ants, but gold found almost on the surface, so that ants *might* dig it up. Travellers' tales could easily have supplied all the rest. When we speak of virgin-gold, we do not mean that it was dug up by virgins, but that it is as pure as a virgin. In the same manner, gold lying so near the surface that it *might* be dug up by ants could well have been called ant-gold.

The Greek writer who is responsible for most travellers' tales about India is Ctesias, who lived in Persia as physician to the king Artaxerxes Mnemon. His books on India and Persia are lost, but they have often been quoted, and there is a large collection of fragments. He had a very bad reputation even among the ancient Greeks on account of the incredible stories which he told. In fact he is simply called a liar. But it should be stated that many of his incredible stories are not pure inventions, but were due

[1] *Journ. Roy. Asiatic Soc.*, vii. p. 143.

[2] Tad vai pipîlika*m* nâma uddh*r*i*t*a*m* yat pipîlika*ih* *g*âtarûpa*m* dro*n*amayam ahârshu*h* pu*ñg*aso n*r*ipâ*h*.

to such misunderstandings as are almost inevitable between people speaking different languages. We know, for instance, that the Hindus were very fond of describing hostile neighbours as evil spirits or Râkshasas. All the hideous features which their imagination had conjured up in describing uncanny spirits, ghosts, ogres, and goblins were afterwards transferred to the more or less savage tribes with whom they came in contact in India, or on the frontiers of India. It is not unusual, even with us, to hear the Kafirs talked of as black devils. No wonder that travellers who heard these descriptions of half-imaginary beings, or of black devils, should have taken them for descriptions of real beings in India. Anyhow, we can prove in several cases that what Ctesias and others represent as real monsters living in some part of India correspond with the devils of Hindu folklore. He tells us, for instance, of a real race of men who lived on the mountains where the Indian reed grows, and where their number, he says, is no less than 30,000. Their wives bear offspring once only in their whole lifetime. Their children have teeth of perfect whiteness, both the upper set and the under, and the hair both of their head and of their eyebrows is from their infancy quite grey, whether they be boys or girls. Indeed, every man among them, till he reaches his thirtieth year, has all the hair on his body white, but from that time forward it begins to turn black, and by the time they are sixty there is not a hair to be seen upon them but what is black. These people, both men and women alike, have eight fingers on each hand and eight toes on each foot. They are a very warlike

people, and five thousand of them, armed with bows and spears, follow the banners of the king of the Indians. Their ears, he adds, are so large that they cover their arms as far as the elbows, while at the same time they cover all the back, and the one ear touches the other.

Now this is clearly a traveller's tale, and yet it is not a mere invention, but, like most fables, it has a kernel of truth surrounded by a film of misunderstanding. I mean, the Indians themselves had imagined monsters of that description, and had introduced them into their popular poetry as either hostile and fiendish powers, or, in some cases, as helpful spirits also. We find exactly the same in our own mediaeval poetry, and while there is a certain sameness and tameness about the angels which human imagination has called into existence, the brood of devils, whether in poetry or in painting, displays a most wonderful wealth and variety of imagination. It seems to admit of no doubt that Ctesias or his friends, whether Persians or Indians—he tells us that he actually saw Indians, two women and five men, and states that their complexion was fair, not black—mistook these more or less legitimate creations of a wild fancy for real beings. Some of their features can be clearly traced back to their true source, while others may or may not be embellishments, due to his witnesses, or to his own excited brain. The Indians are, for instance, perfectly well acquainted with a race called *Ekagarbhas*, of which the Greek ἐνοτίκτουτες may be a literal translation. Their women, according to the Purâṇas, have offspring once only in their whole life, but instead of living on the Indus or

Ganges, they are located by the Hindu poets in a division of the terrestrial heaven. In the epic poetry of India[1] another race is mentioned called Karṇaprâvaraṇa (lit. those who used their ears as a covering), who dwelt in the southern region. Skylax already had mentioned a race whom he calls Ὠτόλικνοι, having shovel-sized ears, and at a later time Megasthenes also speaks of Ἐνωτοκοίται, that is, people who slept in their ears. It is possible that these were races who had artificially distended their ears, a custom which we find among other savages also, but it is possible also that what are called ears were originally lappets, made of skins or metal, protecting the ears in battle; nay, it has been suggested that, as in the case of the god Gaṇeśa, some of these imaginary races were represented with elephant-heads, in which the ears would naturally form a very prominent feature.

However that may be, I think we are justified in saying that Ctesias was not a simple liar, or a traveller who thought he could say anything as long as it amused his readers. It seems that he simply lent a willing ear to the more or less imaginative Orientals with whom he came in contact. He had a taste for the marvellous, he seized on it, and allowed himself to magnify what had caught his own fancy. The temptation was much greater in his time, as there was no one likely to control his statements or to contradict him. This, I believe, is the genesis of most travellers' tales; and what is curious is, that there has always been a large public delighting in what is marvellous and absurd, nay, taking an actual pride in their ability to believe it all.

[1] *Mahâbh.* iii. 297; v. 16137.

Marvellous stories about India continued to be told, not only in ancient times, when there was little chance of checking them, but during the whole of the Middle Ages. Even Marco Polo cannot be quite absolved from the charge of romancing, and it is curious to observe how some of the very stories which we see in Ctesias turn up again in Marco Polo's *Travels*. Ctesias speaks, for instance, of people with heads of dogs, the *Kynokephaloi*, and he states that they have large and hairy tails, both men and women. The story of the tails may possibly be traced back to such names as *Sunahsepa*, *Sunahpukkha*, *Sunolangula*, all meaning Dog-tail, and belonging to persons mentioned in the Veda. We have lately heard a good deal of how it came to pass that during the Middle Ages the French believed that Englishmen had tails (*Angli caudati*). That the heads of certain savage races were like the heads of dogs is, no doubt, within the limits of possibility, and that they were black, had teeth, tails, and voices of dogs, would soon follow. Some baboons are called Kynokephaloi, and as we know from the Râmâyana that the army of Râma included baboons or *Vânaras*, who, however, like the Kynokephaloi of Ctesias, understood and spoke the language of the people (p. 35), we see here, too, some vague elements from which Ctesias could well have framed his fairy-tales. What is curious is, that Marco Polo, when describing the Andaman Islanders, should use the same expression, and describe them as people having heads like dogs, and teeth and eyes likewise; in fact, in the face they are, he says, just like big mastiff-dogs—they are no better than wild beasts.

The persistence of these stories is extraordinary. Not long ago Babu Sohâri Dâs, in his book on the manners and customs of the Hindus, related that an old woman once told him that her husband, a sepoy in the British army, had told her that he had himself seen a people who slept on one ear and covered themselves with the other[1]. But I must linger no longer on these early travellers' tales about India, and proceed to those of more recent origin.

One would have thought that after the discovery of the sea road to India in the sixteenth century, and still more after the discovery of the ancient literature of India, through Sir William Jones and his fellow workers, these tales would have ceased. And so they did to a certain extent. We hear no more of races with dogs' heads, with one eye, or with one leg on which they managed to run faster than anybody else, nor of people with one foot so large that they were able to use it as a parasol when lying on their backs in hot weather. But a new and equally strange class of fables has taken their place. India continued to be considered as the home of a people possessed of mysterious wisdom. As it had been proved that Sanskrit, the ancient language of India, was clearly related to Greek, Latin, and the other Aryan languages, it was supposed that all these languages were derived from Sanskrit, and came from India; and, as some of the Greek deities had been traced back to Vedic deities, India was believed to have been the birthplace of all the Greek gods. India was, in fact,

[1] *Domestic Manners and Customs of the Hindus.* Benares, 1860. *Ind. Ant.* (May, 1877), p. 133, n.

looked upon as a kind of primaeval paradise, and people felt thoroughly convinced that if the Brâhmans would only be more communicative we should find in their ancient literature the germs of all the wisdom and religions of the world, Judaism and Christianity not excluded. The Pandits were sent for. They were told what, according to the Old Testament, the history of the world had really been, how there had been an Adam and Eve, and a Deluge, and a Noah, with his three sons; and afterwards an Abraham and his wife Sarah, and all the rest. They were flattered by being assured that all these things must occur in their own sacred writings, and that otherwise they would not be true. They were actually offered rewards if they would only communicate what was wanted. And here, as elsewhere, demand created supply, and a very able scholar, Lieutenant Wilford, sent a number of articles to be published in the *Asiatic Researches*, in which Adam and Eve, and the Deluge, and Noah, with his sons, Abraham and Sarah, nay, even Isaac, appeared all in due order. These articles produced a great consternation all over Europe. Sir William Jones was asked to examine the Sanskrit originals, and his decision was in favour of their genuineness. What more could be required? There were the Sanskrit MSS., and in them there were Adam and Eve, and Noah, and Abraham, and all the rest. It was no use to remonstrate and to say that such things were impossible, quite as impossible as when some years ago Shapirah offered the original MSS. of the Pentateuch, written by Moses himself. Scholars might say that Moses did not write, that no cursive Hebrew alphabet existed at that early time; the majority

were, as usual, in favour of the impossible—viz. of our possessing at last the original scrolls written by the hand of Moses. So it was here. Scholars might show that after the Semitic nations had once become Semitic, and the Aryan nations Aryan, there was no community of language and religion possible between them. The more incredible things are, the more ready people seem to be to believe them. However, the Nemesis came at last. The MSS. of Lieutenant Wilford were examined once more, and it was found that the leaves containing the Old Testament stories had all been skilfully foisted in. Of course, Pandits are able to write Sanskrit even now, and far better than our classical scholars can write Latin. However, the curious part is, that even after the whole matter had been cleared up, after Sir William Jones had openly declared that he had been deceived, after Lieutenant Wilford had in the most honourable way expressed his regret for what had happened, these articles crop up again and again, like Australian rabbits. They continue to be quoted, they are quoted even now, till it seems almost impossible ever to exterminate them.

Another more recent case is that of a Frenchman, M. Jacolliot. He was President of the Court of Justice at Chandernagore, and, being a judge, I need not say how constantly he is quoted by his admirers as a judge, and as the highest authority in judging of evidence. He has written a number of books: I saw the other day an advertisement of his works in twenty-five volumes. The best known is his *La Bible dans l'Inde*. In it his object is to show that our civilization, our religion, our legends, our gods,

have come to us from India, after passing in succession through Egypt, Persia, Judaea, Greece, and Italy. This statement, we are told, has been admitted by almost all Oriental scholars. This is a strange assertion. I do not know of a single Oriental scholar who has admitted this statement. Even Professor Whitney in America calls M. Jacolliot 'a bungler and a humbug[1].' The Old and New Testaments, we are told by M. Jacolliot, are found in the Vedas, and the texts quoted by the French judge in support of his assertion are said to leave it without doubt. Brahma created Âdima—i. e. Adam—and gave him for companion *Heva*. He appointed the island of Ceylon for their residence. Then he gives us a most charming idyll of the life of Âdima and Heva in paradise, extracts from which may be read in *Selected Essays*, ii. p. 479.

No one acquainted with Sanskrit or Pâli literature can doubt for a single moment that all the so-called translations from ancient Sanskrit texts are mere invention, whatever M. Jacolliot's friends may say to the contrary. All that can possibly be said for him is what I said about Herodotus and Ctesias. He may have misunderstood what was told him, he may have received buttered toast instead of potatoes, or he may have been taken in as Ctesias was, nay, as Lieutenant Wilford was. He confesses as much himself. 'One day,' he writes[2], 'when we were reading the translation of Manu by Sir W. Jones, a note led us to consult the Indian commentator, Kullûka Bhatta, when we found an allusion to the sacrifice of a son by his father prevented by God Himself

[1] *Isis*, i. p. 47. [2] *Selected Essays*, ii. p. 474.

after He had commanded it. We then had only one *idée fixe*—namely, to find again in the dark mass of the religious books of the Hindus the original account of that event. We should never have succeeded but for "the *complaisance*" of a Brâhman with whom we were reading Sanskrit, and who, yielding to our request, brought us from the library of his pagoda the works of the theologian Ramatsariar, which have yielded us such precious assistance in this volume.'

Now I say again there is no scholar who knows Sanskrit or Pâli, whether he has lived in India or not, who would not simply smile at all this. I said so when Jacolliot's book first appeared, and I am sorry to say I was in consequence insulted and almost assaulted in my own house by an irate admirer of Jacolliot's. However, even Jacolliot has been outbid by M. Edouard Schuri, whose eloquent article on the Legend of Krishna was actually accepted and published by the *Revue des Deux Mondes* of 1888, pp. 285–321.

You can easily understand that it is represented[1] as the height of professional conceit that scholars like myself, who have never been in India, should venture to doubt statements made by persons who have spent many years in that country. This has always been a very favourite argument. If Sanskrit scholars differ from writers who have been twenty years in India, they are told that they have no right to speak; that there are MSS. in India which no one has ever seen, and that there are native scholars in possession of mysteries of which we poor professors have no

[1] *Nineteenth Century*, May, 1893.

conception. When asked for the production of those MSS., or for an introduction to these learned Mahâtmas —for India is not so difficult to reach in these days as it was in the days of Marco Polo—they are never forthcoming. Nay, the curious thing is that real Sanskrit scholars who have spent their lives in India, and who know Sanskrit and Pâli well, know absolutely nothing of such MSS., nothing of such teachers of mysteries. They are never known except to people who are ignorant of Sanskrit or Pâli. That seems to be the first condition for being admitted to the esoteric wisdom of India. The fact is, that there is no longer any secret about Sanskrit literature, and I believe that we in England know as much about it as most native scholars. Anyhow, such extracts as M. Jacolliot produces from MSS. brought to him are what every Sanskrit scholar would call at once the horns of a hare, or the children of a barren woman. They have no existence; they are pure inventions.

Of late years, the treasures of Sanskrit MSS. still existing in India have been so thoroughly ransacked that it has become quite useless to appeal to hidden MSS. supposed to contain the ancient mysteries of the religion of India. If a new text is discovered, there is joy among all true Sanskrit scholars in India and in Europe. But the very idea that there are secret and sacred MSS., or that there ever was any mystery about the religion of the Brâhmans, is by this time thoroughly exploded. Whatever there was of secret religious doctrines in India consisted simply of doctrines for the reception of which a certain previous training was required. Every member of the three upper castes had free access to the Vedas, and if the fourth class

were not allowed to learn the Veda by heart, this arose from a social far more than from a religious prejudice. Again, it is quite true that the doctrines of the Vedânta or the Upanishads were sometimes called *Rahasya*, that is, secret; but this, too, meant no more than that teachers should not teach these portions of the Veda except to persons of a certain age and properly qualified for these higher studies. When we hear Aristotle called the Smaller Mysteries and Plato the Greater Mysteries, this does not mean that their writings were kept secret. It only meant that students must first have learnt a certain amount of Greek and have qualified themselves for these more advanced studies, just as students at Oxford advance step by step from the smaller to the greater mysteries, that is, from Smalls to Mods., and from Mods. to Greats. Greats may be great mysteries to a freshman, but no one is excluded from participation in them, if only he feels inclined to be initiated.

But if there was nothing mysterious about Brahmanism, it is sometimes thought there might be some mysteries hidden in Buddhism. A scholarlike study of Buddhism came later in Europe than a scholarlike study of Brahmanism, and the amount of rubbish that was written on Buddhism before the knowledge of Pâli and Sanskrit enabled scholars to read the sacred texts of the Buddhists for themselves is simply appalling. Buddhism was declared to be the original religion of mankind, more ancient than Brahmanism, more ancient than the religion of the Teutonic races; for who could doubt that Buddha was the same name as that of Wodan? Christianity itself was represented as a mere plagiarism, its doctrines and legends were

supposed to have been borrowed from Buddhism, and we were told that the best we could do in order to become real Christians was to become Buddhists. There exists at present a new sect of people who call themselves *Christian Buddhists*, and they are said to be numerous in England and in France. The *Journal des Débats* of the 10th of May, 1890, speaks of 30,000 *Bouddhistes Chrétiens* at Paris. In India, more particularly in Ceylon, their number is supposed to be much larger.

These are serious matters, and cannot be treated merely as bad jokes or crazes. It is, indeed, very important to observe that there is some foundation for all these crazes, nay, that there is method in that madness. There is, for instance, a tradition of a Deluge in the Veda as well as in the Old Testament; there is in the Veda the story of a father willing, at the command of the god Varuṇa, to sacrifice his son. Nor can it be denied that there is a very great likeness between some moral doctrines and certain legends of Buddhism and Christianity. We ought to rejoice at this with all our heart, but there is no necessity for admitting anything like borrowing or stealing on one side or the other. A comparative study of the religions of antiquity has widened our horizon so much, and has so thoroughly established the universality of a certain amount of religious truth, that if we found the Ten Commandments in the sacred books of the Buddhists we should never think of theft and robbery, but simply of a common inheritance. We actually find the Dasaśîla, the Ten Commandments, in Buddhism, but they are not at all the Ten Commandments of Moses. It is different when we come to facts and

legends. When it is pointed out that with regard to these also there are great similarities between the life of Christ and the life of Buddha, I feel bound to acknowledge that such similarities exist, and that, though many may be accounted for by the common springs of human nature, there are a few left which are startling, and which as yet remain a riddle.

It is owing, no doubt, to these coincidences that a very remarkable person, whose name has lately become familiar in England also, felt strongly attracted to the study of Buddhism. I mean, of course, the late Madame Blavatsky, the founder of Esoteric Buddhism. I have never met her, though she often promised, or rather threatened, she would meet me face to face at Oxford. She came to Oxford and preached, I am told, for six hours before a number of young men, but she did not inform me of her presence. At first she treated me almost like a Mahâtma, but when there was no response I became, like all Sanskrit scholars, a very untrustworthy authority. I have watched her career for many years from her earliest appearance in America to her death in London last year. She founded her *Theosophic Society* at New York in 1875. The object of that society was to experiment practically in the occult powers of Nature, and to collect and disseminate among Christians information about Oriental religious philosophies. Nothing could be said against such objects, if only they were taken up honestly, and with the necessary scholarly preparation. Later on, however, new objects were added, namely to spread among the benighted heathen such evidences as to the practical results of Christianity as will at least give

both sides of the story to the communities among which missionaries are at work. With this view the society undertook to establish relations with associations and individuals throughout the East, to whom it furnished authenticated reports of the ecclesiastical crimes and misdemeanours, schisms, heresies, controversies and litigations, doctrinal differences and Biblical criticisms and revisions with which the press of Christian Europe and America constantly teems. You may easily imagine what the outcome of such a society would be, and how popular its Black Book would become in India and elsewhere. However, I am quite willing to give Madame Blavatsky credit for good motives, at least at the beginning of her career. Like many people in our time, she was, I believe, in search of a religion which she could honestly embrace. She was a clever, wild, and excitable girl, and anybody who wishes to take a charitable view of her later hysterical writings and performances should read the biographical notices, lately published by her own sister, in the *Nouvelle Revue*. It is the fault of those who guide the religious education of young men and women, and who simply require from them belief in certain facts and dogmas, without ever explaining what belief means, that so many, when they begin to think about the different kinds of human knowledge, discover that they possess no religion at all.

Religion, in order to be *real* religion, a man's own religion, must be searched for, must be discovered, must be conquered. If it is simply inherited or accepted as a matter of course, it often happens that in later years it falls away, and has either to be reconquered or to be replaced by another religion.

Madame Blavatsky was one of those who want more than a merely traditional and formal faith, and, in looking round, she thought she could find what she wanted in India. We are ready to give Madame Blavatsky full credit for deep religious sentiments, more particularly for the same strong craving for a spiritual union with the Divine which has inspired so many of the most devout thinkers among Christians, as well as among so-called heathen. Nowhere has that craving found fuller expression than among the philosophers of India, particularly among the Vedânta philosophers. Like Schopenhauer, she seems to have discovered through the dark mists of imperfect translations some of the brilliant rays of truth which issue from the Upanishads and the ancient Vedânta philosophy of India.

To India, therefore, she went with some friends, but, unfortunately, with no knowledge of the language, and with very little knowledge of what she might expect to find there, and where she ought to look for native teachers who should initiate her in the mysteries of the sacred lore of the country. That such lore and such mysteries existed she never doubted; and she thought that she had found at last what she wanted in Dayânanda Sarasvatî, the founder of the Ârya-Samâj. His was, no doubt, a remarkable and powerful mind, but he did not understand English; nor did Madame Blavatsky understand either the modern or the ancient languages of the country. Still there sprang up between the two a mutual though mute admiration, and a number of followers soon gathered round this interesting couple. However, this mute admiration did not last long, and when the two

began to understand each other better they soon discovered that they could not act together. I am afraid it can no longer be doubted that Dayânanda Sarasvatî was as deficient in moral straightforwardness as his American pupil. Hence they were both disappointed in each other, and Madame Blavatsky now determined to found her own religious sect—in fact, to found a new religion, based chiefly on the old religions of India.

Unfortunately, she took it into her head that it was incumbent on every founder of a religion to perform miracles, and here it can no longer be denied that she often resorted to the most barefaced tricks and impositions in order to gain adherents in India. In this she succeeded more than she herself could have hoped for. The natives felt flattered by being told that they were the depositaries of ancient wisdom, far more valuable than anything that European philosophy or the Christian religion had ever supplied. The natives are not often flattered in that way, and they naturally swallowed the bait. Others were taken aback by the assurance with which this new prophetess spoke of her intercourse with unseen spirits, of letters flying through the air from Tibet to Bombay, of showers of flowers falling from the ceiling of a dining-room, of saucers disappearing from a tea-tray and being found in a garden, and of voices and noises proceeding from spirits through a mysterious cabinet. You may ask how educated people could have been deceived by such ordinary jugglery; but with some people the power of believing seems to grow with the absurdity of what is to be believed. When I expressed my regret to one of her greatest admirers that Madame

Blavatsky should have lowered herself by these vulgar exhibitions, I was told, with an almost startling frankness, that no religion could be founded without miracles, and that a religion, if it was to grow, *must be manured.* These are the *ipsissima verba* of one who knew Madame Blavatsky better than anybody else; and after that it was useless for us to discuss this subject any further.

But, as I said before, I am quite willing to allow that Madame Blavatsky started with good intentions, that she saw and was dazzled by a glimmering of truth in various religions of the world, that she believed in the possibility of a mystic union of the soul with God, and that she was most anxious to discover in a large number of books traces of that theosophic intuition which reunites human nature with the Divine. Unfortunately, she was without the tools to dig for those treasures in the ancient literature of the world, and her mistakes in quoting from Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin would be amusing if they did not appeal to our sympathy rather for a woman who thought that she could fly though she had no wings, not even those of Icarus.

Her book, called *Isis Unveiled,* in two volumes of more than 600 pages each, bristling with notes and references to every kind of authority, both wise and foolish, shows an immense amount of drudgery and misdirected ingenuity. To quote her blunders would be endless. Of what character they are will be seen when I quote what she says about the serpent being the good or the evil spirit[1]. 'In this case,' she writes, 'the serpent is the *Agathodaimon,* the good spirit; in its opposite aspect it is the *Kakothodai-*

[1] i. p. 133.

*mon*, the bad one.' I believe that this mistake, when I pointed it out to an undergraduate friend of mine at Oxford, saved him from enrolling himself as an Esoteric Buddhist. Again, speaking as if she knew the whole of Vedic literature, she says[1]: 'Certainly, nowhere in the Veda can be found the coarseness and downright immorality of language that Hebraists now discover throughout the Mosaic Bible.'

It is very difficult, when you deal with ancient races who go about almost naked, to decide what is immodest and what is not. But, speaking not altogether without book, I may say that the Veda does contain certain passages which would not bear translation into English.

Again, what shall we say to the argument that the Vedas must have been composed before the Deluge, because the Deluge is not mentioned in them[2]? Now, first of all, the Deluge is mentioned in the Brâhma*ṇa* of the Ya*g*ur-veda, and Madame Blavatsky knows it; and secondly, are we really to suppose that every book which does not mention the Deluge was written before the Deluge? What an enormous library of antediluvian books we should possess! M. Jacolliot, as usual, outbids Madame Blavatsky. He writes:—

'The Vedas and Manu, those monuments of old Asiatic thought, existed far earlier than the diluvian period; this is an incontrovertible fact, having all the value of an historical truth, for, besides the tradition which shows Vish*ṇ*u himself as saving the Vedas from the Deluge—a tradition which, notwithstanding its legendary form, must certainly rest upon a real fact—it has been remarked that neither of these sacred books mentions the cataclysm, while the Purâ*ṇ*as and the Mahâbhârata describe it with the minutest detail, which is a proof of the priority of the former. The Vedas certainly

[1] ii. p. 80. [2] ii. p. 727.

would never have failed to contain a few hymns on the terrible disaster which, of all other natural manifestations, must have struck the imagination of the people who witnessed it.'

Such hymns could only have been written by Noah or by Manu, and we possess, unfortunately, no poetic relics of either of these poets, not even in the Veda. I must quote no more, nor is more evidence wanted, to show that Madame Blavatsky and her immediate followers were simply without bricks and mortar when they endeavoured to erect the lofty structure which they had conceived in their minds. I give full credit to her good intentions, at least at first. I readily acknowledge her indefatigable industry. She began life as an enthusiast; but enthusiasts, as Goethe says, after they have come to know the world, and have been deceived by the world, are apt to become deceivers themselves.

The number of her followers, however, has become so large in India, and particularly in Ceylon, that the movement started by her can no longer be ignored. There are Esoteric Buddhists in England also, in America, and in France; but I doubt whether in these countries they can do much harm. To her followers Madame Blavatsky is a kind of inspired prophetess. To me it seems that she began life as an enthusiast, though not without a premature acquaintance with the darker sides of life, nor without a feminine weakness for notoriety. After a time, however, she ceased to be truthful both to herself and to others. But although her work took a wrong direction, I do not wish to deny that here and there she caught a glimpse of those wonderful philosophical intuitions which are treasured up in the sacred books of the East. Un-

fortunately she had fallen an easy prey to some persons whom she consulted, whoever they were, whether Mahâtmas from Tibet, or Panditammanyas in Calcutta, Bombay, or Madras. Disappointed in Dayânanda Sarasvatî and his often absurd interpretations of the Veda, she turned to Buddhism, though again without an idea how or where to study that religion.

No one can study Buddhism unless he learns Sanskrit and Pâli, so as to be able to read the canonical books, and at all events to spell the names correctly. Madame Blavatsky could do neither, though she was quite clever enough, if she had chosen, to have learnt Sanskrit or Pâli. But even her informants must have been almost entirely ignorant of these languages, or they must have practised on her credulity in a most shameless manner. Whether she herself suspected this or not, she certainly showed great shrewdness in withdrawing herself and her description of Esoteric Buddhism from all possible control and contradiction. Her Buddhism, she declared, was not the Buddhism which ordinary scholars might study in the canonical books; hers was *Esoteric Buddhism*. 'It is not in the dead letter of Buddhistical sacred literature,' she says, 'that scholars may hope to find the true solution of the metaphysical subtleties of Buddhism. The latter weary the power of thought by the inconceivable profundity of its ratiocination: and the student is never farther from truth than when he believes himself nearest its discovery[1].' We are told, also[2], that there was a prehistoric Buddhism which merged later into Brâhmanism, and that this was the religion preached by Jesus

[1] i. p. 289. [2] ii. p. 123.

and the early Apostles. After we have been told that there was a Buddhism older than the Vedas—and we might say with the same right that there was a Christianity older than Moses—we are told next of a pre-Vedic Brâhmanism, and, to make all controversy impossible, Madame Blavatsky tells us that 'when she uses the term Buddhism she does not mean to imply by it either the exoteric Buddhism instituted by the followers of Gautama Buddha, nor the modern Buddhistic religion, but the secret philosophy of Śâkyamuni, which, in its essence, is identical with the ancient wisdom religion of the sanctuary, the pre-Vedic Brâhmanism.' 'Gautama,' we are assured, 'had a doctrine for his "elect," and another for the outside masses.' Then she adds apologetically, 'If both Buddha and Christ, aware of the great danger of furnishing an uncultivated populace with the double-edged weapon of knowledge which gives power, left the innermost corner of the sanctuary in the profoundest shade, who that is acquainted with human nature can blame them for it?' Then why did she, being evidently so well acquainted with human nature, venture to divulge these dangerous esoteric doctrines? Though I must say what she does divulge seems very harmless.

With such precautions Madame Blavatsky's Esoteric Buddhism was safe against all cavil and all criticism. As no one could control the statements of Ctesias as to a race of people who used their ears as sheets to sleep in, no one could control the statements of the Mahâtmas from Tibet as to a Buddhism for Madame Blavatsky to dream in. I do not say that no Mahâtmas exist in India or in Tibet. I simply say that modern

India is the worst country for studying Buddhism. India is, no doubt, the birthplace of Buddha and of Buddhism. But Buddhism, as a popular religion, has vanished from India, so that the religious census of the country knows hardly of any Buddhists, except in Ceylon and in some districts bordering on Tibet or Burmah. As no Buddhist teachers could be found in Bombay or Calcutta, some imaginary beings had to be created by Madame Blavatsky and located safely in Tibet, as yet the most inaccessible country in the world. Madame Blavatsky's powers of creation were very great, whether she wished to have intercourse with Mahâtmas, astral bodies, or ghosts of any kind. Here is a list of the ghosts for whose real existence she vouches: 'peris, devs, djins, sylvans, satyrs, fauns, elves, dwarfs, trolls, norns, nisses, kobolds, brownies, necks, stromkarls, undines, nixies, salamanders, goblins, banshees, kelpies, pixies, moss people, good people, good neighbours, wild women, men of peace, white ladies, and many more.' Shall we, then, concede, she asks, that all who have seen these creatures were hallucinated? It is difficult to answer such a question without seeming rude. I should certainly say they were hallucinated, and that they were using words of which they knew neither the meaning nor, what is even better, the etymology. So long as Madame Blavatsky placed her Mahâtmas beyond the Himalayas both she and her witnesses were quite safe from any detectives or cross-examining lawyers. I saw, however, in the papers not long ago that even the believers in Madame Blavatsky begin to be sceptical about these trans-Himalayan Mahâtmas. At the annual Theosophical Convention, held at Chicago in 1892, a lady

asked why outsiders were always told that the Mahâtma sages dwelt beyond the Himalayan mountains. Mr. Judge, who is now the head of the American Theosophists, replied that it was for seclusion. 'If they were anywhere in the United States,' he said, 'they would be pestered and interviewed by reporters.' This admitted of no reply, particularly in America.

We, the pretended authorities of the West, are told to go to the Brahmans and Lamaists of the Far Orient, and respectfully ask them to impart to us the alphabet of true science. But she gives us no addresses, no letters of introduction to her Tibetan friends, though in another place she tells us

'that travellers have met these adepts on the shores of the sacred Ganges, brushed against them in the silent ruins of Thebes, and in the mysterious deserted chambers of Luxor. Within the halls upon whose blue and golden vaults the weird signs attract attention, but whose secret meaning is never penetrated by the idle gazers, they have been seen, but seldom recognized. Historical memoirs have recorded their presence in the brilliantly illuminated salons of European aristocracy. They have been encountered again on the arid and desolate plains of the Great Sahara, as in the caves of Elephanta. They may be found everywhere, but make themselves known only to those who have devoted their lives to unselfish study, and are not likely to turn back' (p. 17).

We see that Madame Blavatsky might have achieved some success if she had been satisfied to follow in the footsteps of Rider Haggard, Sinnet, or Marion Crawford; but her ambition was to found a religion, not to make money by writing new *Arabian Nights*.

But when we come to examine what these depositaries of primaeval wisdom, the Mahâtmas of Tibet and of the sacred Ganges, are supposed to have taught her we find no mysteries, nothing very new, nothing very

old, but simply a medley of well-known though generally misunderstood Brahmanic or Buddhistic doctrines. There is nothing that cannot be traced back to generally accessible Brahmanic or Buddhistic sources, only everything is muddled or misunderstood. If I were asked what Madame Blavatsky's Esoteric Buddhism really is, I should say it was Buddhism misunderstood, distorted, caricatured. There is nothing in it beyond what was known already, chiefly from books that are now antiquated. The most ordinary terms are misspelt and misinterpreted. *Mahâtma*, for instance, is a well-known Sanskrit name applied to men who have retired from the world, who, by means of a long ascetic discipline, have subdued the passions of the flesh and gained a reputation for sanctity and knowledge. That these men are able to perform most startling feats and to suffer the most terrible tortures is perfectly true. Some of them, though not many, are distinguished as scholars also; so much so that Mahâtma—literally 'great-souled'—has become an honorary title. I have myself had the honour of being addressed by that name in many letters written in Sanskrit, and sent to me—not, indeed, through the air, but through the regular post-office—from Benares to Oxford. That some of these so-called Mahâtmas are impostors is but too well known to all who have lived in India. I am quite ready, therefore, to believe that Madame Blavatsky and her friends were taken in by persons who pretended to be Mahâtmas, though it has never been explained in what language even they could have communicated their Esoteric Buddhism to their European pupil. Madame Blavatsky herself was, according

to her own showing, quite unable to gauge their knowledge or to test their honesty, and she naturally shared the fate of Ctesias, of Lieutenant Wilford, and of M. Jacolliot.

That there are men in India, knowing a certain amount of Sanskrit and a little English, who will say yes to everything you ask them, I know from sad experience; and it would be very unfair to say that such weaklings exist in India only. If people wish to be deceived, there are always those who are ready to deceive them. This, I think, is the most charitable interpretation which we can put on the beginnings of that extraordinary movement which is known by the name of *Esoteric Buddhism*, nay, which, on account of the similarities which exist between Buddhism and Christianity, claims in some places the name of Christian Buddhism. On this so-called Christian Buddhism, and on the real similarities between Buddhism and Christianity, I may have something to say at another time. At present I only wish to show that if there is any religion entirely free from esoteric doctrines it is Buddhism. There never was any such thing as mystery in Buddhism. Altogether, it seems to me that *mystery* is much more of a modern than of an ancient invention. There are no real mysteries even in Brahmanism, for we can hardly apply that name to doctrines which were not communicated to everybody, but only to people who had passed through a certain preparatory discipline. The whole life of a Brâhman in ancient India was under a certain control. It was divided into four stages: the school, the household, the forest, and the solitude. Up to the age of twenty-seven a young man was

supposed to be a student in the house of a Guru. After that he had to marry and found a household, and perform all the religious acts which were prescribed by the Vedas; then, when he had seen his children's children, he was expected to retire from his house, and live, either alone or with his wife, in the forest, released from social and religious duties—nay, allowed to enjoy the greatest freedom of philosophic speculation.

Now it is quite true that the Âra*n*yakas, the Forest-books, and the Upanishads in which these philosophical speculations are contained were sometimes called *Rahasya*—that is, secret. They were not to be communicated to young people, nor to the married householder—very naturally, for they taught that the gods whom the young men and the married householders had believed in were not gods at all, but simply different names of the Unknown behind Nature, and that of the Great Spirit or Brahma nothing could be predicated except sat, that he was; *k*it, that he perceived and thought; and ânanda, that he was blessed—hence he was often called Sa*kk*idânanda. Sacrifices, and all outward worship, which had before been represented as necessary for man's salvation, were now represented as not only useless, but as actually hurtful, if performed with any selfish view to rewards in another life. Whereas the whole of the Veda had formerly been represented as superhuman, inspired, and infallible, one part of it, the Karmakâ*nda*, the practical part, consisting of the hymns and the Brâhma*n*as, the liturgical books, was now put aside, and there remained only the *gñ*ânakâ*nda*, the philosophical part, that is, whatever

treated of Brahman and its relation to the individual soul. This only, and more particularly the Upanishads, continued to be considered as really necessary for salvation. For salvation was by knowledge only, or, as we should say, by faith, and not by works.

The highest object of this contemplative life in the forest was the finding of one's own soul, the saving of one's soul alive, the discovery of the Âtman, the self, and not the mere Ego. This was no easy matter. Even in those early days the existence of a soul had been denied. Some held that body and soul were the same; others, that the soul was the breath; others, again, that it was the Ego or the mind with all its experiences, with its perceptions and conceptions and all the rest. The hermits in the forest, after they had subdued all the passions of the body and wrenched themselves free from all its fetters, had now to learn that the soul was something that according to its very nature could never be seen, or heard, or perceived like the objective world which was visible and perishable; because, if perceived, it would at once become something objective, something totally different from the perceiving subject. It would no longer be the soul. The unseen and unperceivable something which was formerly called the soul was now called the self, Âtman. Nothing could be predicated of it except that it was, that it perceived and thought, and that it must be blessed. When they had once discovered that the Âtman, the self within us, shared its only possible predicates with the Brahman, the invisible self behind nature and behind the so-called gods of nature, the next step was easy enough—namely, the discovery of the original identity of the self and of

Brahman, the eternal oneness of man and God, the substantial identity of human and divine nature. To restore that identity by removing the darkness of ignorance by which it had been clouded—to become, as we should say, one with God and He with us, or rather to lose our self, and find our self again in God—that was henceforth the highest goal of the remaining years of the old man's life in the forest. Was it not natural that these doctrines, which were contained in the Upanishads, and which were afterwards minutely elaborated in the Vedânta-sûtras, should have been kept secret from the young and from those who had still to perform the practical duties of life? Nor was there much difficulty in keeping them secret. For as in ancient India there were no books, and as all teaching was oral, a teacher had to be found to communicate the doctrines of the Upanishads, and it was almost self-interest, if no higher motive, that would have kept the teachers from communicating these so-called mysteries. Still, whoever was fit to receive them had a right to become once more a pupil in his old age, and in that sense the Upanishads were no more mysteries than any other book which it is not good for young people to read. Nevertheless, what happened to all mysteries happened to the Upanishads also. Not that there was any wish on the part of the young to share in the ascetic life of their elders, or any idle curiosity to discover what enabled these solitary sages to preserve such serenity of mind, such freedom from all desires, and such perfect happiness during the last period of their life, spent in the peaceful shade of the forest.

But the time came when those who had passed

through all the trials and miseries of life, and who after a stormy voyage had found a refuge in the harbour of true philosophy, whose anchors were no longer dragging, but resting firmly on the rock of truth—the time came when these men themselves, conscious of the bliss which they enjoyed, said to themselves, 'What is the use of this dreary waiting, of all the toil of youth, of all the struggle of life, of all the trouble of sacrifices, of all the terrors of religion, when there is this true knowledge which changes us in the twinkling of an eye, discloses to us our real nature, our real home, our real God?' This thought—I do not mean the belief in a union between the human and the divine, but this conviction that the preparatory stages of student life and married life were useless, and that it was better at once to face the truth—has always seemed to me the true starting-point of Buddhism as an historical religion. Buddhism has come to mean so many things that I always feel a kind of shiver when people speak of Buddhism as teaching this or that. Buddhism had, no doubt, an historical origin in the fifth century B.C., and there were many causes which led to its rapid growth at that time. But from a social point of view, the first and critical step consisted in Buddha's opening the doors of a forest life to all who wished to enter, whatever their age, whatever their caste. That life in the forest, however, is not meant to be what it used to be in former times, a real retirement from the village, and a retreat into the solitude of the forest, but simply a retirement from the cares of the world, a life with the brotherhood, and a performance of the duties imposed on the brotherhood by the founder of

the Buddhist order, the young prince of Kapilavastu, called Gautama, Buddha, Śâkyamuni, Siddhârtha, Mahâśramaṇa, and many other names. This leaving of the world before a man had performed the duties of a student and of a father of a family was the great offence of Buddhism in the eyes of the Brahmans, for it was that which deprived the Brahmans of their exclusive social position as teachers, as priests, as guides and counsellors. In this sense Buddha may be said to have been a heretic, and to have rejected the system of caste, the authority of the Veda, and the whole educational and sacrificial system as based on the Veda. He could never be forgiven for having arrogated to himself the right of teaching, which was the exclusive right of a Brahman born. The critical event in the life of Buddha himself was really his leaving father, mother, wife, and children behind, and going alone into the forest. Thus he says of himself:—

'And I, O disciples, still young, strong, my hair dark, in my happy youth, in the flower of my manhood, against the will of my parents who were crying and grieving for me, went forth, my hair cut and my beard shaved, dressed in the yellow garb (the garb of the Buddhist mendicant). I went from my home into homelessness.'

But though this was heresy and rebellion in the eyes of the Brahmans, we must not imagine that Buddhism was from the first, as it has often been supposed to be, a new religion, independent of, nay, in open opposition to, Brahmanism. There has never been in the whole history of the world what could be called an entirely new religion. Every religion we know presupposes another religion, as every language presupposes an antecedent language. Nay, it seems

almost impossible to conceive the possibility of an entirely new religion quite as much as of an entirely new language. Mohammedanism presupposes Christianity, Judaism, and a popular faith prevailing among the Arab tribes. Christianity presupposes Judaism and Greek philosophy; Judaism presupposes an earlier and more widely spread Semitic faith, traces of which appear in the inscriptions of Babylon and Nineveh. Beyond the religion of the Mesopotamian kingdoms there seems to have been an Accadian religion, and beyond that our knowledge comes to an end. The ancient religion of Zoroaster, again, presupposes the Vedic religion, while the Vedic religion points to a more ancient Aryan background. What lies beyond that common Aryan religion is again beyond the reach of history, nay, even of conjecture. But it may certainly be stated that, as no human race has ever been discovered without any language at all, neither do we know of any human tribe without something like a religion, some manifestation of a perception of a Beyond, or that sense of the Infinite beneath the Finite, which is the true fountain head of all religion.

Much as Buddhism in its later development differs from Brahmanism, Buddha's teaching would be quite inconceivable without the previous growth of Brahmanism. This is too often ignored, and many words and concepts are treated as peculiar to Buddhism which were perfectly familiar to the Brahmans. In many cases, it is true, Buddha gave a new meaning to them, but he borrowed the substance from those who had been the teachers of his youth. It is generally imagined, for instance, that Nirvâṇa, about which so

much has been written, was a term coined by Buddha. But Nirvâ*n*a occurs in the Bhagavad-gîtâ, and in some of the Upanishads. It meant originally no more than the blowing out or the expiring of all passion, the calm after the storm, the final emancipation and eternal bliss, reunion with the Supreme Spirit (Brahma-nirvâ*n*a), till in some of the Buddhist schools, though by no means in all, it was made to signify complete extinction or annihilation. Whatever Nirvâ*n*a may have come to mean in the end, there can be no doubt as to what it meant in the beginning—the extinction of the fire of the passions. But that beginning lies outside the limits of Buddhism; it is still within the old domain of Brahmanism.

The name, again, by which Buddha and his followers called themselves, and by which they first became known to Greeks and other nations—Sama*n*a—is likewise of Brahmanic growth. It is the Sanskrit Srama*n*a, an ascetic or mendicant, derived from the word sram, 'to toil, to weary.' Buddha was often called 'Samano Gotamo,' the ascetic Gotamo, though it was he who put down the extreme tortures which Brahmanic ascetics inflicted on themselves during the third stage of their lives, the retreat to the forest. With the Buddhists everybody who has left house, home, family, to whatever caste he may have belonged before, may become a Sama*n*a, but the word soon assumed the more general sense of a saint, so that a man may be called a Samana even though he has not assumed the humble dress of an ascetic. Thus we read in the Dhammapada, 142—

'He who, though dressed in fine apparel, exercises tranquillity, is quiet, subdued, restrained and chaste, and has ceased to find

fault with other beings—he is indeed a Brâhmaṇa, a Śramaṇa (Samaṇa), a Bhikshu.'

Here we see at the same time what a high idea Buddha, who used to be represented as the enemy of the Brahmans and of Brahmanism, assigns to the name of Brâhmaṇa, and how entirely he remains the child of his time. With him a Brahman is a saint, and a Bhikshu a mendicant not far removed from a saint.

The Greeks changed Samaṇa into Σαμαναῖοι and sometimes into Σεμνοί. *Shaman*, however, the Tungusian name for a priestly sorcerer[1], is not derived from Samaṇa, but is a word of Tungusian origin.

Many more words might be mentioned which to us seem Buddhistic, but which are really of Brahmanic workmanship. There are, in fact, few Buddhistic words and few Buddhistic concepts which, if we treat them historically, do not disclose their Brahmanic antecedents, more or less modified in the later schools of the Buddhists. Scholars begin to see that, as we cannot fully appreciate Pâli, the sacred language of Buddhism, without knowing Sanskrit, we cannot fully understand the teaching of Buddha without knowing the antecedent periods of Brahmanic thought.

Even when Buddha, the young prince of Kapilavastu, determined to leave his family, wife, son, father, and friends, and to embrace the state of homelessness, he followed the example set to him by the Brahmanic Śramaṇas, and submitted to all the cruel tortures to which the dwellers in the forest thought it right to subject themselves. It took him several years before he perceived their utter uselessness, nay, their

[1] Köppan, *Die Religion des Buddha*, i. p. 330, n.

mischievous influence. He then adopted a more rational life, what he called a *via media*, equally removed from extreme asceticism and from self-indulgence. In all this there was no secret, nothing esoteric, no mystery. On the contrary, whatever there may have been of mystery among the Brahmanic dwellers in the forest was now proclaimed to all the world by the monks who formed the real Buddhistic brotherhood in the midst of a very independent laity. If there is any religion thoroughly popular, thoroughly unreserved, without admitting any priestly privileges, it was the original religion of Buddha. Brahmanism used Sanskrit as its sacred language; Buddha adopted the vulgar dialects spoken by the people, so that all might be able to follow his teaching.

I cannot give a better explanation of the change of Brahmanism into Buddhism than by stating that Buddhism was the highest Brahmanism popularized, everything esoteric being abolished, the priesthood replaced by monks, and these monks being in their true character the successors and representatives of the enlightened dwellers in the forest of former ages. The Buddhist community consisted of monks (not priests) and laymen. The monks were what the ascetics (*Śramaṇas*) had been; only they were no longer obliged to pass through the previous stages of Brahmaḳârin (religious student) and of Gṛihastha (householder), though, like Buddha himself, they *might* have been married and fathers of a family if only after a time they were willing to surrender all they used to call their own. As to keeping any of these doctrines secret, nothing could have been more opposed to the spirit of their founder. Whatever of

esoteric teaching there may have been in other religions, there was none in the religion of Buddha. Whatever was esoteric or secret was *ipso facto* not Buddha's teaching; whatever was Buddha's teaching was *ipso facto* not esoteric. Buddha himself, though he knows well that there is, and that in every honest religion there always must be, a distinction between the few and the many, would approve of no barriers between them except those which they made for themselves. He speaks with open scorn of keeping any portion of the truth secret. Thus he says in one of his short sermons [1]—

'O disciples, there are three to whom secrecy belongs and not openness. Who are they? Secrecy belongs to women, not openness; secrecy belongs to priestly wisdom, not openness; secrecy belongs to false doctrine, not openness. To these three belongs secrecy, not openness.

But there are three things that shine before all the world, and not in secret. Which are they? The disk of the moon, O disciples, shines before all the world, and not in secret; the disk of the sun shines before all the world, and not in secret; the doctrines and rules proclaimed by the perfect Buddha shine before all the world, not in secret. These three things shine before all the world, and not in secret.'

And this is by no means a solitary occasion on which Buddha condemns anything like mystery in religion, or what is meant by Esoteric Buddhism. There is a memorable dialogue between him and his disciple Ânanda shortly before his death, in which he condemns not only mystery in religion, but any appeal to external authority, any obedience to anything but the voice within. We read in the *Mahâparinibbâna Sutta* (p. 35):—

'28. Now when the Blessed One had thus entered upon the rainy season (when the monks go into retreat) there fell upon him a dire

[1] *Anguttara Nikâya*, pp. 1, 3, 129.

sickness, and sharp pains came upon him, even unto death. But the Blessed One, mindful and self-possessed, bore them without complaint.

29. Then this thought occurred to the Blessed One: It would not be right for me to pass away from existence without addressing the disciples, without taking leave of the order. Let me now, by a strong effort of the will, bend this sickness down again, and keep my hold on life till the allotted time be come.

30. And the Blessed One, by a strong effort of the will, bent that sickness down again, and kept his hold on life till the time he fixed upon should come. And the sickness abated upon him.

31. Now very soon after, the Blessed One began to recover. When he had quite got rid of the sickness, he went out from the monastery, and sat down behind the monastery on a seat spread out there. And the venerable Ânanda went to the place where the Blessed One was and saluted him, and took a seat respectfully on one side, and addressed the Blessed One and said: I have beheld, Lord, how the Blessed One was in health, and I have beheld how the Blessed One had to suffer. And though at the sight of the sickness of the Blessed One my body became weak as a creeper, and the horizon became dim to me, and my faculties were no longer clear, yet notwithstanding I took some little comfort from the thought that the Blessed One would not pass away from existence until at least he had left instructions as touching the order.

32. What then, Ânanda (he replied)? Does the order expect that of me? I have preached the Truth without making any distinction between *exoteric and esoteric doctrine:* for in respect of the truths, Ânanda, the Tathâgata has no such thing as the closed fist of a teacher, who keeps some things back.'

## Then he inveighs against the idea that after his death his disciples should be guided by anything but the Spirit of Truth within them.

'Surely, Ânanda (he says), should there be any one who harbours the thought, It is I who will lead the brotherhood, or, The order is dependent upon me, it is he who should lay down instructions in any matter concerning the order. Now the Tathâgata, O Ânanda, thinks not that *he* should lead the brotherhood, or that the order is dependent upon *him.* Why then should he leave instructions in any matter concerning the order? I too, O Ânanda, am now grown old and full of years; my journey is drawing to its close, I have reached my sum of days, I am turning eighty years of age, and just

as a worn-out cart, Ânanda, can only with much additional care be made to move along, so, methinks, the body of the Tathâgata can only be kept going with much additional care. . . .

33. Therefore, O Ânanda, be ye lamps unto yourselves. Be ye a refuge to yourselves. Betake yourselves to no external refuge. Hold fast as a refuge to the Truth. Look not for refuge to any one besides yourselves. . . .

35. And whosoever, Ânanda, either now or after I am dead, shall be a lamp unto themselves, and a refuge unto themselves, shall betake themselves to no external refuge, but holding fast to the Truth as their lamp, and holding fast as their refuge to the Truth, shall not look for refuge to any one besides themselves—it is they, O Ânanda, among my Bhikkhus, who shall reach the very highest height, provided they are willing to learn.'

Can anything be more outspoken, more determined? No one is to be entrusted with private or secret instruction as to the future rule of the Church, no one is to claim any exceptional authority. But the highest seat of authority is always to be with the man himself and with the voice of truth within.

And this is the religion, of all others, chosen by Madame Blavatsky as an *esoteric* religion. Buddha, who would have no secrets, whether for the laity or for his own beloved disciples, is represented as withholding the double-edged weapon of knowledge from the uncultivated populace and keeping the innermost corner of the sanctuary in the profoundest shade. No traveller's tale was ever more audacious and more incongruous than this misrepresentation of the character of Buddha and his doctrine.

I repeat that I do not think that Madame Blavatsky invented Esoteric Buddhism. I am quite willing to believe that, as in her first intercourse with Brahmanism in the person of Satyânanda Sarasvatî, she was, when face to face with Buddhist Mahâtmas, very much like Goethe's fisherman who was drawn into

the waves by a mermaid: 'Halb zog sie ihn, halb sank er hin!'—half she sank, half she was drawn. She was deceived by persons who saw that she almost wished to be deceived, and that she had no means whatever of defending herself against deceit. I go even further, and admit that even by giving a distorted picture of Buddhism she has done some good by attracting general attention to a religion which, with all its shortcomings, deserves our highest regard and our most careful study. If her followers could only give up the idea that no religion can be founded without miracles, if they would only read how Buddha himself denounces all miracles except one, they would learn that what they call miracles has been the bane of all honest religions. It is quite true that Buddha[1] and his contemporaries, whether his followers or opponents, speak of certain miracles as if they had seen them performed every day. As miracles of magic power Buddha mentions the fact that one man may appear as many, or many as one; that a man may become invisible, may pass through a wall as if through air, may rise through the air as if in water, may walk on water as if on the earth, and may be lifted up through the air like a bird, so that he reaches the moon and the sun, nay, even the world of Brahman. All these miracles are recognized by Buddha as perfectly possible, but he denies that they have anything to do with the truth of his teaching, that they can carry any conviction, or can convert a man who is unbelieving and unloving into a man who believes and loves. Buddha freely admits that some men have the power of reading the thoughts

[1] *Digha Nikâya*, i. 1, 11. Neumann, p. 62.

of other people, and of remembering their own former existences, but again he denies that such things can carry conviction. The greatest miracle with Buddha is *teaching*, by which an unbeliever is really converted into a believer, an unloving into a loving man. And when his own disciples come to him asking to be allowed to perform the ordinary magic miracles, he forbids them to do so, but allows them to perform one miracle only, which everybody could, but nobody does, perform, namely, to confess our sins, and again not in secret, not in a confessional, but publicly and before the whole congregation.

If Madame Blavatsky would have tried to perform that one true Buddhistic miracle, if she had tried to confess openly her small faults and indiscretions, instead of attempting thought-reading, levitation, or sending letters through the air from Tibet to Calcutta, and from Calcutta to London, or if those who willingly or unwillingly allowed themselves to be deceived by her would openly renounce all these childish tricks and absurdities, they might still do much good, and really manure a vast neglected field for a new and rich harvest. I must say that one of Madame Blavatsky's greatest admirers, Colonel Olcott, has of late years entered on a much more healthy sphere of activity, one in which he and his friends may do some real good. He has encouraged and helped the publication of authentic texts of the old Brahmanic and Buddhist religions. He has tried to inspire both Brahmans and Buddhists with respect for their old religions, and has helped them to discover in their sacred books some rays of truth to guide them through the dark shadows of life. He has shown them how, in spite of many

differences, their various sects share much in common, and how they should surrender what is not essential and keep what is essential as the true bond of a wide religious brotherhood[1]. In all this he has my fullest sympathy. It is because I love Buddha and admire Buddhist morality that I cannot remain silent when I see his noble figure lowered to the level of religious charlatans, or his teaching misrepresented as esoteric twaddle. I do not mean to say that Buddhism has never been corrupted and vulgarized when it became the religion of barbarous or semi-barbarous people in Tibet, China, and Mongolia; nor should I wish to deny that it has in some places been represented by knaves and impostors as something mysterious, esoteric, impenetrable, and unintelligible. It is true, also, that, particularly in the so-called Mahâyâna Buddhism, there are certain treatises which are called secret—for instance, the *Tathâgataguhyaka*, the hidden doctrines of the Tathâgatas or the Buddhas; but they are secret, not as being withheld from anybody, but simply as containing more difficult and recondite doctrines. Even the *Secret of Hegel* is no longer a mystery, as Mr. Hutchinson Sterling has shown, though it requires a certain amount of preparation. If Madame Blavatsky had appealed to any one of the canonical books of the Mahâyâna Buddhists, we should have known what she meant by Esoteric Buddhism. As it is, it is impossible to discuss any one of the doctrines which she and her followers present to the

[1] *A United Buddhist World: being Fourteen Fundamental Buddhistic Beliefs, certified by the High Priests of Burma, Chittagong, Ceylon, and Japan, to be common to Northern and Southern Buddhism.* Compiled by H. S. Olcott (Madras, 1892).

public as *esoteric*, because they have never given us chapter and verse for what they call Buddhism, whether esoteric or exoteric.

I have already alluded to the difficulty of speaking of Buddhism in general, or laying down what doctrines are considered as orthodox or as heterodox by Buddha and by his numerous disciples and followers. Buddhism, we must remember, was, from the very beginning, but one out of many philosophical and religious systems which abounded in India at all times. We know that the same freedom of thought which Buddha claimed for himself in forsaking the old Brahmanic traditions was claimed by several of his contemporaries who became founders of new schools. There was very little of what we should call dogma in Buddha's teaching. He professed to deliver man from suffering by showing them the unreal and transitory character of the world. But with regard to some of what we call the fundamental questions of religion—the existence of a deity, the reality and immortality of the soul, the creation and government of the world—he allowed the greatest freedom: nay, it seems to be his chief object to protest against any positive dogma on these points. Hence there arose from a very early time a large number of what have been called sects among the Buddhists, though they seem to have been hardly more than either philosophical schools or small congregations committed to the observance of certain minute points of discipline.

We read in the chronicles of Ceylon, the Dîpavansa (v. 53) and Mahâvansa (v. 8), of eighteen sects the origin of which is referred to the second century after

Buddha. Though that date seems doubtful, we cannot doubt that at the time of Asoka, or in the third century B.C., these eighteen sects existed, and likewise six so-called modern sects. We know the names of these sects as they have been preserved in Sanskrit, Pâli, Tibetan, Chinese, and Mongolian documents, but of their origin and of the points on which each differed from the rest our information is as yet very insufficient. It is curious that so much should have been preserved, and yet so little. We have long lists of names, but very little beyond the names. In some cases the points on which one sect differed from the other were extremely trifling, such as whether salt might be kept longer than seven days; whether animals exist in heaven; whether a child can be converted before it is born; whether the thoughts of a dreamer are indifferent; whether Buddha was born in all quarters of the universe, and whether some Buddhas surpass others. In other cases the points of difference are of greater importance, such as whether there is a soul in man; whether the dead derive benefit from gifts; whether prophecy is possible; whether a knowledge of other people's thoughts can be obtained by meditation; whether a layman can become an Arhat and obtain Nirvâ*n*a; whether Buddha was really born in the world of men; whether Buddha had mercy; whether he was superhuman in the ordinary affairs of life[1]; whether the doctrine of Buddha was altered and made afresh at the great

[1] Rhys Davids, *Journ. Roy. Asiatic Soc.* (1892), p. 9. How far such questions on the true character of a Buddha can be carried may be seen from the fact that one sect differed from the rest by holding that *excrementa Buddhae sunt suaveolentia*.

Councils. The number of these sects seems always to have been on the increase, and when in the fifth and the seventh centuries Chinese pilgrims visited India, their number had become so great that one can hardly understand how any unity could have been preserved among them.

If all these points, and many more, were left open questions between the Buddhist sects, we can well understand how there should be so much disagreement among those who undertook to write a history of Buddhism. We know that on some of the most important points Buddha himself declined to pronounce a decided opinion, and, in this sense, Madame Blavatsky would be quite right in saying that we do not know for certain what Buddha taught his disciples, and his disciples their followers, who became the founders of these numerous sects. Still, whatever we know of Buddha and Buddhism, we must try to know at first-hand—that is to say, we must be prepared to give chapter and verse in some canonical or authoritative book; we must not appeal to Mahâtmas on the other side of the Himalayas. Various attempts have been made to show that the Canon of the Southern Buddhists, the so-called Tripiṭaka, the Three Baskets, was more modern than the Buddhists themselves represent it to be. Some scholars have gone so far as to assign to it a date more recent than that of the New Testament. I have always admitted that the tradition of its being the work of the immediate disciples of Buddha, at the first Council, held in the very year of Buddha's death, is untenable, or at all events doubtful. But I have never doubted that a real Canon of sacred texts was settled at the Council

held under Asoka in the third century before our era. This date has now been confirmed by inscriptions. Asoka's well-known inscriptions refer to single portions of the Canon only, but Dr. Hultzsch has pointed out that in one of the smaller Bharhut inscriptions[1] there occurs the word 'pakanekâyika' —a man who knows the five Nikâyas. These five Nikâyas are the five divisions of the Suttapiṭaka, and as the inscription dates from the third century B. C., we may rest assured that at that time the most important part of the Buddhist Canon, the Suttapiṭaka, existed as we now have it, divided into five portions —the Dîgha-nikâya, the Maggh*i*ma-nikâya, the Sam-yutta-nikâya, the Anguttara-nikâya, and the Khuddaka-nikâya[2].

However, with all that has been done of late for the study of Buddhism, no honest scholar would deny that we know as yet very little, and that we see but darkly through the immense mass of its literature and the intricacies of its metaphysical speculations. This is particularly true with regard to what is called the Mahâyâna, or Northern Buddhism. There are still several of the recognized canonical books of the Northern Buddhists, the Nine Dharmas, of which the MSS. are beyond our reach, or which frighten even the most patient students by their enormous bulk. In that sense Madame Blavatsky would be quite right—that there is a great deal of Buddhism of which European scholars know nothing. But we need not go to Madame Blavatsky or to her Mahâtmas in Tibet in order to know this, and it is certainly not

[1] No. 144, *Z. D. M. G.*, xl. 75.
[2] See Neumann, *Buddhist. Anthologie*, p. xii, n.

from her books that we should derive our information of the Mahâyâna literature. We should go to the MSS. in our libraries, even in the Bodleian, in order to do what all honest Mahâtmas have to do, copy the MSS., collate them, and translate them. In the translations of the Sacred Books of the East which the University of Oxford has entrusted to my editorship, and to which I have devoted the last sixteen years of my life, any one who takes a serious interest in the Science of Religion will find ample materials, and, what is more, important authentic materials, translated, as well as they can be translated at present, by the best scholars in England, France, Germany, and India. Deeply grateful as I feel to the University of Oxford, and to the Secretary of State for India, for having allowed me the leisure and the funds necessary for carrying out so large an undertaking, I cannot but regret that, like all the work we undertake in this life, this too must be left imperfect. It is true, a series of forty-eight volumes is a small library by itself, but, compared with what ought to have been done, it is but a beginning. I have often been blamed for not having included in my series a number of books every one of which seems to this or that scholar of supreme importance. No doubt I ought to have given a translation of one at least of the eighteen Purâṇas, but my critics have evidently no idea how difficult it is to find at the right time the right translator for the right book. My correspondence about the translation of the Vâyu-Purâṇa would fill a little volume by itself. The Vedic literature, also, is as yet very imperfectly represented. But Vedic scholarship is in a period of transition, and no Vedic scholar is

willing to commit himself more than he can help. Everybody is at work in deciphering a word here and a word there; some may venture on translating a few verses or a few hymns, but a complete translation of the Rig-veda will not, I am afraid, form part of our *fin-de-siècle* literature. Sanskrit scholars also must leave something to the next century to do besides deciphering the many as yet undeciphered Egyptian, Accadian, Babylonian, Etruscan, Lycian, and Orkhon inscriptions. Now that my series of the Sacred Books of the East has come to an end, offers of assistance come in from many sides for which formerly I should have been most grateful. Let others who are younger and stronger take up the work where I left it. To the value of this series the most competent judges have borne their testimony. This only I may venture to say myself—that this collection of the Sacred Books of the East, brought out with the co-operation of the best Oriental scholars, will, for the future, render such aberrations as Madame Blavatsky's Esoteric Buddhism impossible. I know that it will continue to live and continue to do good as long as people continue to care for what they have hitherto cared most for, namely, religion—not only *a* religion, not only this or that special religion which they have themselves inherited, but for religion as a universal blessing and as the most precious birthright of the whole human race.

# ESOTERIC BUDDHISM[1].

## (A Reply to Professor Max Müller by Mr. A. P. Sinnett.)

ON any subject connected with the sacred literature of the East Professor Max Müller writes—for English readers—with great authority. His article therefore on Esoteric Buddhism will, no doubt, have been accepted but too widely as fatal to the system of thought identified with that expression. He finds nothing in the Buddhist books about any interior teaching behind that plainly conveyed, and confidently declares that nothing of the kind exists. For people altogether ignorant of theosophical doctrine this will be conclusive; others, acquainted in some measure with theosophical literature, will be puzzled at the professor's attitude. He refrains from coming in any way to close quarters with the body of belief he seeks to discredit, ignoring it so entirely that one cannot make out whether he has taken the trouble to look into it at all. And, summed up in a few words, his argument is that Buddhism cannot contain any teaching hitherto kept secret, because the books hitherto published do not disclose any secrets of the kind. If they had done so, where would have been the secrecy? When we know what the esoteric teaching

[1] Reprinted by permission from the *Nineteenth Century*, June, 1893.

is we may indeed find evidence in the published books to show that it was known to their authors; but when any one says 'There is an esoteric side to Buddhism,' that is equivalent to saying there is a view of this subject which is not found in the books. How is he shown to be wrong by the fact that the books do not contain it?

But the present attack is further embarrassing in this way: it rests chiefly on an unfavourable survey of Madame Blavatsky's career, associated with criticisms of her book *Isis Unveiled*. That was written some years before Esoteric Buddhism was formulated, and Madame Blavatsky was not the writer who formulated that system. All students of theosophy are under deep obligations to her. But Professor Max Müller gives us the history of the movement upside down. Before I can vindicate the ideas he seeks to disparage, I must comb out the facts which he has left in such curious confusion.

In 1883 I was enabled to bring into intelligible shape a view of the origin and destinies of man derived from certain teachings with which I was favoured while in India. It challenged the attention of Western readers because it seemed to furnish a more reasonable interpretation of man's spiritual constitution and of the world's purpose, than any with which European thought had previously been concerned. It provided something like a scientific abstract of all religious doctrine, by the help of which it was easy to separate the wheat from the chaff in various ecclesiastical creeds. Allowing for symbolical methods of treatment as entering largely into popular religions, the new teaching showed that Brahmanism,

Buddhism, and Christianity could be accounted for as growing up at various periods in India and Europe from the same common root of spiritual knowledge. But since Buddhism had apparently separated itself less widely than other religions from the parent stem, I gave my book the title *Esoteric Buddhism*, partly in loyalty to the exterior faith preferred by those from whom my information had come, partly because even in its exterior form that religion was already attracting a great deal of sympathetic interest in Europe, and seemed the natural bridge along which European thinking might be conducted to an appreciation of the beautifully coherent and logical view of Nature I had been enabled to obtain.

The name of the book clung to the system it described, and no one was more surprised or amused than its author when people, attracted by its means to become theosophists, or students of Divine science, were first spoken of by newspaper writers, dealing hastily with the new departure of thought, as 'Esoteric Buddhists.' In that form the term was a misnomer. Theosophists might just as well have been called Esoteric Christians or Esoteric Brahmins. But it is one thing for reviewers, dealing on the spur of the moment with a new school of philosophy, to apprehend it imperfectly; it is another for a learned professor, attacking it ten years later, to eclipse their worst mistakes.

To begin with, Professor Max Müller calls Madame Blavatsky the founder of Esoteric Buddhism, and describes her as a 'clever, wild, and excitable girl,' in search of a new religion she could honestly embrace. Her clever girlhood had ripened till she was close on

sixty, when the term Esoteric Buddhism was first brought into use; and, whether it was a good or a bad term, she had nothing to do with its selection, and indeed quarrelled with it—as I think, rather unnecessarily—in some of her later writings. What she really founded was the Theosophical Society for the study of Eastern Religions (among other objects), and it was through that Society, and through her aid in the first instance—for which I can never be sufficiently grateful—that I came into relations with the fountain of information from which my teaching has ever since been derived. But when Professor Max Müller proceeds to find fault with *Isis Unveiled*, and criticizes that interesting and suggestive work by picking out a Greek word that is incorrectly written, fancying in that way to cast discredit on a scheme of philosophy promulgated years after *Isis* was written, in a book by another author, the misdirection of his fault-finding is on a level with the pettiness of the criticism itself. It is notorious to all who knew Madame Blavatsky that she was not only capable of making any imaginable mistake in writing a Greek word, but scarcely knew so much as the alphabet of that language. To understand how it came to pass that under those circumstances the manuscripts she wrote with her own hand were freely embellished with Greek quotations, would require a comprehension of many curious human capacities outside the scope of that scholarship of which Professor Max Müller is justly proud, but unfortunately too often inclined to mistake for universal knowledge.

In so far as his present article is directed to discredit Esoteric Buddhism, Professor Max Müller's

rapid sketch of Madame Blavatsky's career is, for the reasons I have pointed out, irrelevant from A to Z. But the careless plan he has followed in dealing with the subject itself is in keeping with the personal notice. 'People,' he says, 'were taken aback by the assurance with which this new prophetess spoke of her intercourse with unseen spirits; of letters flying through the air from Tibet to Bombay; of showers of flowers falling from the ceiling of a dining-room; of saucers disappearing from a tea-tray and being found in a garden, and of voices and noises proceeding from spirits through a mysterious cabinet. You may ask how educated people could have been deceived by such ordinary jugglery; but with some people the power of believing seems to grow with the absurdity of what is to be believed.' There is no item in this catalogue of wonders that correctly quotes any single incident recorded in any original narrative of Madame Blavatsky's doings. My own book, *The Occult World*, is the principal reservoir of all such records, but, as usual with people who wish to ridicule its testimony, Professor Max Müller prefers to deal not with the book itself, but with some third-hand caricature of its contents. Modern psychic investigation has already harmonized with subtle forces of nature, some of the surprising powers which Madame Blavatsky exhibited. In talking of jugglery, Professor Max Müller is probably unaware that the leading 'juggler' or conjuror of America, Mr. Kellar, has recently written an article in the *North American Review* acknowledging that his experience of wonder-working in India has introduced him to some performances that lie quite outside the domain of the art he professes. That which

is really absurd in this connexion is the power a good many people still show of *dis*believing facts supported by overwhelming evidence if these fail to fit in with their own narrow experience. Credulity is sometimes stupid, no doubt, but irrational incredulity may occasionally be even more so. On that tempting theme, however, I must not dilate for the moment. Madame Blavatsky's achievements in connexion with psychic faculties and forces not yet generally understood, have nothing to do with the really important question whether theosophical doctrine constitutes an acceptable solution of the mysteries of life and death.

Still, paying no attention to that question, Professor Max Müller says, 'No one can study Buddhism unless he learns Sanskrit and Pâli.' No one can comprehend Buddhism, he goes on unconsciously to show us, by virtue merely of scholarship in those tongues. He may do useful work in the preparation of translations for students who deal with living thought rather than with dead language, but Madame Blavatsky with all her literary inaccuracy has done a great deal more than the Sanskrit professor to interpret Eastern thinking, and what are her verbal blunders beside the confusion of the whole attack now made upon her? 'She certainly showed great shrewdness in withdrawing herself and her description of Esoteric Buddhism from all possible control and contradiction. Her Buddhism, she declared, was not the Buddhism which ordinary scholars might study in the canonical books; hers was Esoteric Buddhism.' She did nothing of the sort. She never used the term Esoteric Buddhism except in her *Secret Doctrine* to find fault with my use of it, on the somewhat technical ground

that, meaning what I did, I ought to have spelled the word with one 'd.' In *Isis*, she wrote, 'it is not in the dead letter of Buddhistical sacred literature that scholars may hope to find the true solution of the metaphysical subtleties of Buddhism,' but she was not then engaged in developing the system now called Esoteric Buddhism. She was simply pouring out a flood of miscellaneous information concerning the inner meaning of old-world religions and symbologies, the mysteries of Egypt and Greece, the modern initiations of the East, and the teaching she had acquired there with reference to super-physical planes of nature already beginning to be recognized in the Western world as connecting our phase of existence, however vaguely and cloudily, with other conditions of being. The book was not designed to teach anything in particular, but to stir up interest in an unfamiliar body of occult mysteries. For many people it did this effectually. The Theosophical Society was set on foot; it came to pass that I was entrusted with the task of putting into intelligible shape the views of life and nature entertained by certain Eastern initiates who were interested in the Theosophical Society, and the movement gradually assumed its present character. Nothing is further from my wish than to claim—at Madame Blavatsky's expense—any peculiar merit for myself in the matter. I took charge of a message and carried it to Western readers. But I was a messenger from those whom Madame Blavatsky also to the best of her ability endeavoured to represent —not from herself. This is the important fact for all to remember who wish to understand the present position of Theosophy. All of us who have been

concerned, one way or another, with the movement have acknowledged the immense services Madame Blavatsky rendered in bridging the chasm which separated modern thought from esoteric enlightenment. But with Theosophy itself as a guide through the mazes of existence, Madame Blavatsky's merits and demerits have nothing at all to do. Individuals rise and sink in the stream of a great movement; they do not constitute it. Those who most love and revere Madame Blavatsky are doing the worst service they can render to the cause she worked for, by pinning her name to Theosophy, and making it look like a sect with one fallible mortal at its head. They might as well call astronomy Tycho-Brahism, and study the stars exclusively on the basis of the Danish observer's ideas. Not less absurd in another way is the commonplace attack on Theosophy based on the notion that Madame Blavatsky was its fraudulent inventor. The estimation in which she was held to the last by a devoted body of friends—whose contributions to theosophical literature effectually rebuke the theory that they were weak-minded dupes—is a brief but emphatic refutation of unjust accusations on which too much paper and thought have been expended. Either way the time has gone by for treating Theosophy as a question depending on Madame Blavatsky's personality. Her books remain to be considered on their merits like all other expositions of theosophical doctrine, but neither to be regarded as infallible on the one hand nor as discrediting Theosophy by their mistakes on the other.

At the time of the Oriental Congress last September, theosophical writers were beginning to hope they had

drawn Professor Max Müller into some appreciation of the inner significance of that Oriental literature to the translation of which he had devoted so much industry. He spoke then of the Upanishads and of the ancient philosophy of the Vedanta as throwing 'new light even to-day on some of the problems nearest to our own hearts.' This was a great advance on earlier utterances, in which he dealt with the Vedas, at all events, as the prattling of humanity's baby-hood—or in words to that effect. But now he has again relapsed, and declares there are no mysteries and nothing esoteric either in Buddhism or Brahmanism, though again, later on, he says, 'No honest scholar would deny that we know as yet very little [of Buddhism], and that we see but darkly through the immense mass of its literature and the intricacies of its metaphysical speculations.' This admission is opposed to the force of the bold statement with which he sets out, 'that there is no longer any secret about Sanskrit literature, and . . . that we in England know as much about it as most native scholars.' In view of information on the subject I have had from 'native scholars' the contention is ludicrous, but the question whether there are or are not hidden records bearing on the secrets of Eastern initiation has nothing to do with the main point. Over and above whatever written records exist, there are traditional beliefs and views of nature amongst certain people in India that had not been published anywhere till the current theosophical movement began. I got at these by living in India and coming into relations with those who entertained them, and were willing at last that they should in some measure be made public. Professor

Max Müller, without stopping to think how his own testimony corroborates my position, says there is nothing of all this in the sacred books. Of course not; but, to a greater extent than Professor Max Müller imagines, all this is darkly hinted at in the sacred books. Nobody could pick up these hints unless he had first been instructed in the esoteric doctrine, but to any one who knows something of this the allusions are apparent. From the proper theosophical point of view they are not very important. The theosophical teaching is valuable for its intrinsic worth. It ought not to be recommended to European readers because there is authority behind it. For us the authority from which it emanates need only begin to command respect when we understand the teaching. If it had not been found worthy of respect for its own sake, it would have fallen dead. Instead of that, *Esoteric Buddhism* is read in a dozen editions and languages all over the world. And in time people who read, acquiring from the teaching itself a comprehension of the sources from which it is now derived, grow interested in questions of authority. Around these a considerable theosophic literature grows up. Professor Max Müller does not even glance at it. He hammers away at the single notion—I do not find your secret teachings in the public Buddhist writings. Why does not he argue—there cannot be any ore in the mine for there is none lying on the surface? But, coming back to the traces on the surface that may show those who can interpret them where there is ore lying below, let me offer an illustration of esoteric canonical records that are mere nonsense taken as the scholar takes them—literally—but full

of luminous significance read in the light of esoteric teaching.

Rarely have the scholars blundered more absurdly than in dealing with the records of Buddha's death, and in reading *au pied de la lettre* the story of his fatal illness supervening on a meal of 'dried boar's flesh' served to him by a certain Kunda—a coppersmith at Pava. Laborious students of Oriental language—never concerning themselves with Oriental thought—accept this as meaning, in words quoted by Alabaster in the *Wheel of the Law*, that Buddha died of 'dysentery caused by eating roast pork.' Dr. Rhys Davids gives currency to this ludicrous misconception. Common sense ought to have been startled at the notion that the diet of so ultra-confirmed a vegetarian as a Hindoo religious teacher could not but be, could be invaded by so gross an article of food as roast pork. But worshippers of the letter which killeth are apt to lose sight of common sense. In reality boar's flesh is an Oriental symbol for esoteric knowledge, derived from the boar avatar of Vishnu—an elaborate allegory which represents the incarnate god lifting the earth out of the waters with his tusks—a transaction which Wilson explains in his translation of the Vishnu Purana as representing 'the extrication of the world from a deluge of iniquity by the rites of religion.' Dried boar's flesh clearly stands in the 'Book of the Great Decease' for esoteric knowledge prepared for popular use—reduced to a form in which it could be taught to the multitude. It was through too daring an attempt to carry out this policy that Buddha's enterprise came to an end. That is the true meaning of the allegory so painfully debased when

taken at the foot of the letter. The esoteric view of the story is shown obviously to be the right one by many subordinate details. For example, Buddha directs that only he shall make use of the dried boar's flesh at the allegorical feast. The brethren shall be served with cakes and rice. None but he himself can digest such food, he says, and whatever is left over shall be buried, so that no others may partake of it; a singular order for him to give on the literal interpretation of the story, seeing that he is represented as *not* able to digest it, and as dying of its effects. Of course the meaning plainly is that no one of lesser authority than himself must take the responsibility of giving out occult secrets.

Even more glaring references to esoteric mysteries are embodied in the Akankheyya Sutta[1], where Buddha describes the various attainments open to a Bhikkhu, or disciple who has joined his order.

'If a Bhikkhu should desire, brethren, to exercise one by one each of the different Iddhis, being one to become multiform, being multiform to become one; to become visible, or to become invisible; to go without being stopped to the further side of a wall, or a fence, or a mountain, as if through air; to penetrate up and down through solid ground, as if through water; to walk on the water without dividing it, as if on solid ground; to travel cross-legged through the sky, like the birds on the wing; to touch and feel with the hand even the sun and the moon, mighty and powerful though they be; and to reach in the body, even up to the Heaven of Brahma; let him then fulfil all righteousness; let him be devoted to that quietude of heart which springs from within; let him not drive back the ecstasy of contemplation; let him look through things; let him be much alone.'

So on through several pages. Does this read like nonsense in materialistic Europe? The esoteric teach-

[1] Vol. xi, *Sacred Books of the East.*

ing makes it all intelligible. The whole passage relates to the capacities which are possible for the esoterically-trained and initiated disciple who can live in full consciousness in the astral body, who can render that perceptible (or visible) to ordinary senses if he chooses, to whom the solid matter of the physical plane is no impediment, nor distance an embarrassment. The Sutta in which it occurs points to hidden methods of teaching and training from beginning to end. And the *White Lotus of Dharma*, edited by Professor Max Müller, refers also to the magical faculties of the Buddhist adept, while Ananda was not allowed to sit in the first convocation till he had performed the 'miracles' recognized as qualifying him to be regarded as an Arhat. Certainly the public writings do not say minutely *how* an aspirant is to acquire the abnormal knowledge and powers necessary for such achievements. The real esoteric knowledge, never written down, but handed from master to pupil in the processes of initiation, is alone competent to give practical guidance in such matters. But, as we see, the authority of the canonical books can be quoted as showing that the achievements are recognized as attainable. Does Professor Max Müller regard them as the logical outcome of mere virtuous practice? If not, the old writers clearly suppressed some branch of their teaching in addressing the world at large. It is not enough for Professor Max Müller to say that in describing Arhat powers they were talking nonsense. For the moment that is not the question. Had they in their minds the belief that certain processes of training might lead to those powers? If they had, they were conscious of an esoteric side to their teaching,

and it is obvious beyond dispute that they did entertain such a belief.

Worship of the letter in dealing with sacred writings has been the curse of modern religion, stultifying the spiritual meaning of more books than those under consideration. It is hardly probable that Professor Max Müller would be fettered to that system in discussing Western scriptures, so that it is doubly amazing he should apply that disastrous method of interpretation to the Sacred Books of the East, on which he has bestowed so much of his time and energy.

He tells us that 'Buddhism was the highest Brahmanism popularized, everything esoteric being abolished.' This is a misreading even of the exoteric records. Buddhism popularized Brahmanism in the sense of showing that the attainment of high spiritual beatitude was open to all men who trod the right path—not merely, as Brahmanism taught, to the Brahmins. The esoteric initiations were not abolished —merely held out to all who should become worthy. That is the real meaning of the phrase attributed to Buddha, 'The Tatagatha has no such thing as the closed fist of a teacher who keeps some things back.'

Again, Professor Max Müller says, 'Whatever we know of Buddha and Buddhism we must try to know at first hand—that is to say, we must be prepared to give chapter and verse in some canonical or authoritative book; we must not appeal to Mahâtmas on the other side of the Himalayas.' But whether I obtained the teaching on which *Esoteric Buddhism* rests from a Mahâtma on the other side of the Himalayas or evolved them out of my own head need only interest

people who begin to be seriously interested in the teaching on its own prima facie, intrinsic claims. It is childish to condemn a doctrine as wrong because it emanates from somebody unknown to the reader. It may be rationally ignored by any one bold enough to say, 'I never trust my own judgement; I only consider ideas when they are hall-marked as fit for acceptance by some acknowledged authority.' It may be rationally attacked by any one prepared to assail it on its merits,—if it interests the world in spite of its unknown source. But it can only be irrationally attacked by a writer who neglects the thing said, and yet denounces it because he does not know anything about the person who says it. 'What I know not is not knowledge,' as one distinguished professor is supposed to have put the idea. Professor Max Müller improves on the epigram: 'Philosophers I know not have no existence.' He tells us 'Mahâtma' is a well-known Sanskrit word applied to men who have retired from the world as great ascetics. 'That these men are able to perform most startling feats and to suffer most terrible tortures is perfectly true.' But the term meaning great-souled has become an honorary title. He himself has had letters from Benares addressed to him as Mahâtma. With the recollection of the tone in which I have heard Professor Max Müller's comments on Indian philosophy discussed by native pundits at Benares and elsewhere, it seems just possible there may have been a touch of irony in such a mode of address; but India is, of course, a land of hyperbolical compliment. The servants of any European will call him 'Huzoor,' or 'your Majesty'; everybody is a lord to the man next below him; and, in a spirit

of mockery, so conventional that it has lost all sting, the humblest retainer of every Indian household—the sweeper—is habitually called by his companions 'Maharajah.' This is how it comes to pass that Professor Max Müller has been misled about the Indian ideas attached to the term Mahâtma. Seriously used, it is a term of sublime respect. Applied to the yogi or faqueer who lives in the forest and performs the 'startling feats' which our professor so oddly recognizes—though so scornful of the only such feats abundantly vouched for in recent years—it would merely be a phrase of conventional compliment. I never heard it used even in that way in application to the yogi of the jungle, but negative experience does not count for much. Any one knowing India will feel that it might be used in the way I describe.

Inasmuch as Professor Max Müller says no word concerning the views or system of philosophy set forth in *Esoteric Buddhism,* one can hardly complain that he has travestied or misrepresented them. He has talked up in the air about something else, and, as the article stands, it reads like an attack on the undulatory theory of light grounded on a contention that Sir Isaac Newton mismanaged the Mint. But parting company from him for a moment, to explain the teaching he disapproves of—without having been at the pains to ascertain what it is—the leading ideas of Esoteric Buddhism may be summed up briefly as follows:—

The human creature as we know him is a manifestation on the physical plane of nature of a complex spiritual being developed by slow degrees, by the aggregation round a spiritual nucleus of the capacities and most durable characteristics engendered by his

experience of life through a prolonged series of existences. The body is a mere instrument on which the interior entity performs—such music as he has learned to make. Between the body and the true spiritual nucleus lie intervening principles which express the lower consciousness, active during physical life. The consciousness, both lower and higher, is quite capable of functioning in vehicles independent of the body, and belonging, as regards the material of which they consist, to the next superior plane or manifestation of nature—called for convenience and following the nomenclature of mediaeval occultists—the astral plane, though it has nothing whatever to do with the stars. In every life much of the consciousness that makes up the complete man relates to transitory or ignoble things. After death, therefore, the persistence of this lower consciousness retains the soul for a time on the astral plane, during which period under some conditions it may sometimes become cognizable to still living people, but by degrees the attachment to phases of life which belong exclusively to the incarnate condition wears off, and the real spiritual soul, or in other words the original man, with only the loftier side of his character or nature in activity, passes on to a state of spiritual beatitude analogous to the heaven of exoteric religious teaching. There the person who has passed away is still himself; his own consciousness is at work, and for a long time he remains in a state of blissful rest, the correct appreciation of which claims a great deal of attention to many collateral considerations. When after a protracted period the specific personal memories of the last life have faded out—though the spiritual soul still retains all its capacities,

all the cosmic progress that it has earned, it is drawn back into re-incarnation. The process is accomplished by degrees. The whole entity is not at once conscious within, or expressed by, the body of the young child. But as this grows it becomes more and more qualified to express the original consciousness of the permanent soul, and when it is mature, it is once more the original Ego, minus nothing but the specific memories of its last life.

Why does it not remember? is always the first question of the beginner in theosophic study. Because we who do not remember are as yet but nature's children. Those who are further advanced along the line of cosmic progress *do* remember. But the science of the matter meanwhile is this. The higher spiritual soul is the permanent element in the Ego, and if sufficiently grown, can infuse each new personality which it develops with memories which it, in that case, can retain. But the lower side of ordinary human consciousness, taking the race at its present average development, is a good deal more vigorous than the spiritual nature. The higher soul, immersed again in a material manifestation, is choked as to its consciousness for the time being by the weed growth around it. There is plenty of time, however, in the scheme of nature. After many incarnations the higher soul may get strong enough to bear down the accumulated tendencies gathering round it during its earth-lives. Then an opportunity will come for remembering past lives, and for many other achievements.

The laws which determine the physical attributes, condition of life, intellectual capacities, and so forth

of the new body, to which the Ego is drawn by affinities even more complicated than those of chemical atoms, are known to esoteric and less accurately to ordinary Buddhism as Karma. As you sow so shall you reap. The acts of each life build up the conditions under which the next is spent. In regard to his happiness, and all that has to do with his well-being on this earth, every man has been, in the fullest sense of the term, his own creator, creating the conditions into which he passes in accordance with the Divine law that determines the nature of good and evil, and the consequences of devotion to the one or the other. As the earth-life is thus the school of humanity, it is not an end in itself. To achieve higher spiritual conditions of being is to escape beyond the necessity for re-incarnation. Thus exoteric Buddhism talks of escaping the perpetuation of *life*—meaning incarnate life—as something desirable, in a way which leads those who imperfectly grasp the esoteric significance of the idea to suppose that the extinction of consciousness is the object treated as desirable. The end really contemplated is the permanent elevation of consciousness to spiritual conditions. In the vast scheme of nature, comprehended by the esoteric teaching as that on which the world is planned, the ultimate realization of such spiritual beatitude is regarded as the destiny in reserve for the majority of mankind, after immensely protracted schooling. But by great efforts at any time after a certain turning-point in evolution has been passed, those who realize the potentialities of their being may enter at a relatively early date on their sublime inheritance. To show mankind at large the path which leads to this goal

is the final purpose of esoteric teaching. Incidentally, it pours a flood of light on mysteries of nature that are partially penetrated in some other ways, co-ordinating the otherwise incoherent phenomena of mesmerism and psychic perception and of various occurrences inaptly called supernatural, which some people know to take place but cannot interpret, and which others, content to despise what they cannot account for, thrust aside with irrational laughter. Already Theosophy has vindicated its own teachings for many students whose interior faculties have been ripe for development. The statements of Esoteric Buddhism concerning realms of nature imperceptible to the physical sight have already become realities for some, who are thus enabled to throw back out of their own experience a verification serviceable for others of the occult science to which they owe their progress.

This is the explanation of the fact that the ideas of Esoteric Buddhism which Professor Max Müller does not stoop to comprehend, much less to discuss, have seemed important to many people, caring more for the thing said than for the previous authority of the sayer. Though Madame Blavatsky would have been comically ill-described even in her younger days as a person in search of a religion in which she could honestly believe, that attitude of mind is very widely spread throughout the Western world. Theosophy has dealt with it by providing interpretations of established dogma that invest with an acceptable spiritual meaning creeds offensive to healthy intelligence in their clumsy ecclesiastical form. It has lifted thought above the narrowness of the churches. The first thing a broad-

minded thinker, speculating on the infinite mysteries of nature, feels sure of is that no one body of priests can have a monopoly of the truth. Theosophy shows that scarcely any of them have even a monopoly of falsehood. It gives us religion in the form of abstract spiritual science which can be applied to any faith, so that we may sift its crudities from its truth. It provides us in the system of re-incarnation—cleared of all fantastic absurdities associated with the idea in ages before the esoteric view was fully disclosed—with a method of evolution that accounts for the inequalities of human life. By the doctrine of Karma, attaching to that system, the principle of the conservation of energy is raised into a law operative on the moral as well as on the physical plane, and the Divine element of justice is brought back into a world from which it had been expelled by European theologians. In explaining the psychic constitution of man, Theosophy—as developed by the Theosophical Society, not in the soulless condition to which Professor Max Müller would reduce it, puts on a scientific basis—that is to say, on a footing where law is seen to be uniformly operative—the heterogeneous and bewildering phenomena of super-physical experience. Every advance of knowledge leaves some people aground in the rear, and there are hundreds of otherwise distinguished men amongst us who will probably never in this life realize the importance of new researches on which many other inquirers besides theosophists are now bent. But their immobility will be forgotten in time. Knowledge will advance in spite of them, and views of nature, at first laughed at and discredited, will be taken after a while as matters of course, and, emerging

from the shadow of occultism, will pass down the main current of science. Those of us who are early in the field with our experience and information would sometimes like to be more civilly treated by the recognized authorities of the world; but that is a very subordinate matter after all, and we have our rewards, of which they know nothing. We are well content to be in advance even at the cost of some disparaging glances from our less fortunate companions.

# ESOTERIC BUDDHISM[1]:

## A Rejoinder.

IN giving an account of the religious movement which was originated by Madame Blavatsky, and which in England is best known under the name of *Esoteric Buddhism*, I could not help saying something about the antecedents of that remarkable woman, though I knew that I should give pain to her numerous friends and admirers and expose myself to rejoinders from some of them. I should have preferred saying nothing about her personally, and in order to avoid entering into unpleasant details I referred my readers to the biographical articles written in no unfriendly spirit by her own sister, and published not long ago in the *Nouvelle Revue*. But the movement which bears her name is so intimately connected with her own history, and depends so much on her personal character and the validity of the claims which she made for herself, or which were made for her by her disciples, that it was quite impossible to speak of Esoteric Buddhism without saying something also of Madame Blavatsky and her antecedents. Though I tried to take as charitable a view as possible of her life and character, yet I was quite prepared that, even after the little I felt bound to say, some of her friends

[1] *Nineteenth Century*, August, 1893.

and disciples would take up the gauntlet and defend their lately departed prophetess. Death wipes out the recollection of many things which mar the beauty and proportion of every human life, and in the case of our own friends and acquaintances we often see how, as soon as their eyes are closed in death, our own eyes seem closed to every weakness and fault which we saw but too clearly during their lifetime. It is in human nature that it should be so. While the battle of life is going on, and while we have to stand up for what is right against what is wrong, our eyes are but too keen to see the mote in our brother's eye; but when we look on our friend for the last time in his placid and peaceful slumber, many things which we thought ought not to be forgiven and could never be forgotten are easily forgiven and wiped out from our memory. *De mortuis nil nisi bonum* is an old and, if it is rightly interpreted, a very true saying. It is quite right that we should abstain from saying anything about the departed except what is kind and throws no discredit on them; but it is not right that we should exaggerate their goodness or greatness, and make saints or heroes of them, when we know that they were far from being either the one or the other. In cases, more particularly, where the name or authority of a departed teacher is invoked to lend a higher sanction to doctrines which may be either true or false, survivors are often in duty bound to speak out, however distasteful it may be to them to seem to attack those who can no longer defend themselves.

But though I was quite prepared to see Madame Blavatsky and her life and doctrines warmly defended

by her disciples, I was not prepared to see one of her favourite pupils coming forward so soon after her death to throw her over and claim for himself the whole merit of having originated and named and formulated *Esoteric Buddhism* and all that is implied by that name. I knew indeed that a fierce struggle was going on for the mantle of Madame Blavatsky, and that Colonel Olcott had not yet decided who was to be recognized as her legitimate successor. Few people outside the inner circle would grudge Mr. Sinnett the exclusive paternity of Esoteric Buddhism, but history is history, and I ask all who have watched the origin and growth of Esoteric Buddhism, what would Mr. Sinnett have been without Madame Blavatsky? It is true that Zeus gave birth to Athene without the help of Hera; but did Esoteric Buddhism spring full-armed from the forehead of Mr. Sinnett? Though he assures us that he claims no merit at the expense of Madame Blavatsky, yet he says in so many words that she was not the writer who formulated the system of Esoteric Buddhism. He admits that she founded the Theosophical Society, but he adds that with Theosophy itself her own merits and demerits have nothing to do. He admits that it was through Madame Blavatsky that he himself came into relation with the fountains of information from which his own teaching has been derived. He says that he cannot be sufficiently grateful for her aid. But he boldly claims to be an independent thinker, a new messenger from the same Mahâtmas whom Madame Blavatsky also endeavoured to represent. He repudiates the idea that he was a mere messenger from her. It was he, not she, who was entrusted with

the task of putting into intelligible shape the views of life and nature entertained by certain Eastern initiates. Nay, as if afraid that those whose messenger he professes to be might hereafter appear at Simla, and claim the credit of being the real originators of Esoteric Buddhism, he puts in a *caveat* and says, 'Whether I obtained Esoteric Buddhism from a Mahâtma on the other side of the Himalaya or from my own head is of no consequence.' This sounds ominous, and very much like a first attempt to throw over hereafter, not Madame Blavatsky only, but likewise the trans-Himalayan Mahâtmas. Very few people will agree with Mr. Sinnett that it is of no consequence whether he obtained his transcendent philosophy from ultra-montane Mahâtmas or from his own inner consciousness. If he had ever crossed from India to the other side of the Himalayan mountain range, he would hold a place of honour among geographical discoverers. If, when arrived at the snowy heights so well described by Hiouen-tsang and others, he had made the acquaintance there of one or several Mahâtmas, and been able to converse with them, whether in Tibetan or in Sanskrit or even in Hindustani, on the profoundest problems of philosophy, he would rank second only to Csoma Körösi; and if, moreover, he could prove that such doctrines as he himself comprehends under the name of Esoteric Buddhism were at present taught there by people, whether of Tibetan, Chinese, or Indian origin, he would have revolutionized the history of human thought in that part of the world. But if he addressed the Geographical or the Asiatic or the Royal Society, the first questions which he would have to answer would surely be, By what route did you cross

the Himalaya? What were the names of your Mahâtmas, and where did they dwell? In what language or through what interpreters did you converse with them on such abstruse topics as those which you call Esoteric Buddhism? I have no doubt that Mr. Sinnett has a straightforward answer to all these questions. He probably possesses geographical maps, meteorological observations, and ample linguistic notes, made during his long and perilous journeys. But it is carrying modesty too far to say, as he does, that it makes no difference whether he obtained what he calls Esoteric Buddhism from Mahâtmas on the other side of the Himalaya, or, it may be, from his own head. To the world at large, the only question of real interest is whether the Himalaya has been crossed by him from the Indian side, whether such doctrines as Madame Blavatsky and Mr. Sinnett have published as Esoteric Buddhism are taught by Mahâtmas on the snowy peaks of the Himalayan chain, and, if so, in what language Mr. Sinnett was able to converse with his teachers. Mr. Sinnett's own head and Mr. Sinnett's own philosophy do not concern us, at least at present. I was concerned with Madame Blavatsky and with the movement to which she had given the first impulse, a movement which seemed to me and to many others to have assumed such large proportions, and to cause such serious mischief, that it could no longer be ignored or disregarded. That Hegel's Logic should have been written in Germany in the nineteenth century, after Kant and after Schelling, is perfectly intelligible, at least quite as much as that Buddha's new doctrine should have originated in India in the sixth century B.C., and after the age of the Upanishads.

But if we were told that such a system had been discovered in the moon or in Central Africa, we should be quite as much startled, and our curiosity would have been quite as much roused, as by the assurance that what has been called, and it may be wrongly called, Esoteric Buddhism is taught at present on the other side of the Himalaya, and was communicated there to such casual travellers as Madame Blavatsky and Mr. Sinnett. Mr. Sinnett as well as Madame Blavatsky must have the courage, not of their opinions only, but likewise of their facts. Anyhow, until the questions as stated above have been answered, Mr. Sinnett must forgive me if I confine my remarks to Madame Blavatsky and the propaganda carried on in her name. We do not doubt that in time Mr. Sinnett also may gain a large following, and whenever that time seems to have arrived we may consider it our duty to study his books and warn the public at large against what may seem to be either wrong facts or wrong conclusions. The mischief done by Madame Blavatsky and her publications has been brought to my knowledge by several sad cases, nor should I have been induced to write on the subject at all if I had not repeatedly been appealed to to say in public what I often said in private, and in answer to numerous letters addressed to me.

Mr. Sinnett is very angry with me for not having read his own books and not having criticized his own doctrines. But, though I wrote against Esoteric Buddhism, I never intended to write against him or any of his books published under this or any other name. If he claims an exclusive right in the title of Esoteric Buddhism, he must establish that right

by better evidence than his own *ipse dixit*. If, as he tells us, Madame Blavatsky professed to write Esoteric Buddhism with one *d* instead of two, this only shows that she was ignorant of Sanskrit grammar, while Mr. Sinnett, as a bona fide Sanskrit scholar, is well aware that in past participles the final *dh* of *budh* followed by *t* becomes *ddh*. But considering how Madame Blavatsky declares again and again that her Buddhism was not the Buddhism which ordinary scholars might study in the canonical books, that it is not in the dead letter of Buddhistical sacred literature that scholars may hope to find the true solution of the metaphysical subtleties of Buddhism; when she adds that in using the term Buddhism she does not mean to imply by it either the *exoteric* Buddhism instituted by the followers of Gautama Buddha, nor the modern Buddhistic religion, but the secret philosophy of Śâkyamuni; when she maintains, moreover, that Gautama had a doctrine for his 'elect,' and another for the outside masses, what is her Buddhism if not *non-exoteric*, i.e. *esoteric*? Why then should it not be called so? Why should Mr. Sinnett wish to repudiate his spiritual wife, if not his spiritual mother? That Mr. Sinnett may have written a book on Esoteric Buddhism, that he may have formulated doctrines which in *Isis Unveiled* are, as he says, poured out in wild profusion, that he too holds a commission from some unknown Eastern initiates, that his book has been translated into a dozen languages—all this may be perfectly true. All I have to say for myself is that, in criticizing Madame Blavatsky and her own Esoteric Buddhism, I did not feel bound to criticize him and his theosophy.

I have now at the end of his 'Rejoinder' seen for the first time an abstract of what he calls his own formulated system of philosophy, and I have humbly to confess that it is quite beyond me. Though I flatter myself that I understand Plato and Aristotle, Spinoza and even Hegel, I am quite unable to follow Mr. Sinnett in his theosophical flights. Perhaps I need not be ashamed of this, for he tells us in so many words that he is in advance of all of us, and that he does not mind, therefore, some disparaging glances from his less fortunate companions. Till, therefore, he condescends to adapt his teaching to the more limited capacities of his less fortunate companions, it would be in vain for us to attempt to comprehend or to criticize his new philosophy, whether it springs from trans-Himalaya Mahâtmas or from his own head. We must accept our fate among the *vulgus profanum* 'left aground in the rear, and never able to realize the importance of new researches on which inquirers besides theosophists are now bent.'

As I had never, in the whole of my article on Madame Blavatsky and her own Esoteric Buddhism, ventured to criticize Mr. Sinnett's Esoteric Buddhism, I did not see that I was bound to answer his 'Rejoinder' in the June number of this Review. If his 'Rejoinder' had been inspired by a wish to defend his once revered mistress, I should have felt in duty bound to reply to it. But as his 'Rejoinder,' so far from being a defence of Madame Blavatsky, is in fact nothing but a plea for Mr. Sinnett himself, whom I had never attacked, it was only out of respect for the Editor of the *Nineteenth Century* that I was

induced to write down a few remarks in reply to what he had allowed to appear in the June number of this Review.

Mr. Sinnett has summed up my argument against Esoteric Buddhism in the following words: 'Buddhism cannot contain any teaching hitherto kept secret, because the books hitherto published do not disclose any secrets.' It is not a favourable summing up of my argument, but even thus I willingly accept it. My argument, as represented by Mr. Sinnett, has the weak point of all inductive arguments. We say, for instance, that the sun will never rise in the west, but we can produce no other proof but that hitherto the sun has always risen in the east. Strict reasoners may say, and may truly say, that it may, for all that, rise in the west to-morrow; and if that concession is any comfort to the logical conscience of Mr. Sinnett or anybody else, no one would wish to deprive them of it. Mr. Sinnett takes me to task on the same ground once more. Why, he asks, do I not argue that there cannot be any ore in a mine because there is none on the surface? Has Mr. Sinnett never heard of a deserted mine with unused windlass and dangling rope? Has he never heard what happened to speculators who would bore and bore, though geologists assured them that there was and that there could be no coal in the stratum which they had chosen? What geology can do for the miner, philology can do for the student of literature and religion. Whoever knows the successive strata of Greek literature, knows that it is useless to look for Homeric poetry after the age of Pericles. No scholar would hesitate to say that whatever new papyri of Aristotle's

writings may be discovered in the mummy-cases of Egypt or elsewhere they will never contain a plea for atomic theories. It is a well-known proverb in India, that you may judge a sack of rice by a handful taken out at random. The same applies to Buddhist literature. We have the complete catalogue of the Buddhist canon; we are fully acquainted with large portions of it, and with the same certainty with which the astronomer denies the possibility of the sun rising in the west we may assert that no Buddhist book of ancient date and recognized authority will ever contain esoteric platitudes. Buddha himself, as I have shown, hated the very idea of esoteric exclusiveness. He lived with the people and for the people, he even adopted the vulgar dialects instead of the classical Sanskrit. I therefore maintain my position as strongly as ever, that we shall never find esoteric twaddle in the whole of the Buddhist canon, as little as we shall find coal beneath granite.

Mr. Sinnett finds fault with me for having doubted Madame Blavatsky's knowledge of Greek. But he never understood the meaning of my remarks. I pointed out that Madame Blavatsky's creation of *Kakothodaimon* to match the *Agathodaimon* spoke volumes as to the workings of her mind. Mr. Sinnett imagines that I had simply pointed out an incorrect spelling, and he says that I had made too much of so trifling a matter. Any readers acquainted with Greek will easily have understood what I really meant. But Mr. Sinnett throws over Madame Blavatsky altogether.

'It is notorious to all who knew her' (he writes) 'that she was not only capable of making any imaginable mistake in writing a Greek word, but scarcely knew so much as the alphabet of that language.'

This is rather severe on Madame Blavatsky, and difficult to reconcile with the solemn statement made by another friend of hers, who assures us that she was a scholar and had actually acquired a knowledge of Pâli. But, as if conscious of having been rather unkind to Madame Blavatsky, Mr. Sinnett adds—

'To understand how it came to pass that under those circumstances the MSS. she wrote with her own hand were freely embellished with Greek quotations, would require a comprehension of many curious human capacities outside the scope of that scholarship of which Professor Max Müller is justly proud, but unfortunately too often inclined to mistake for universal knowledge.'

Mr. Sinnett evidently imagines that this assumption of universal knowledge is a common failing of professors, and he triumphantly quotes against me the well-known lines—

'I am the master of my college,
What I know not is not knowledge.'

If, then, for once I may be allowed to claim universal knowledge and speak in the language of esoteric omniscience, I maintain that it would be by no means difficult to understand these Greek embellishments in Madame Blavatsky's publications. May not Madame Blavatsky in a former birth have been a Greek Sibylla? And are not those who are further advanced along the line of cosmic progress, and familiar with superphysical phases of nature, able to recall their former experiences? Did not Buddha himself, at least according to the testimony of his followers, claim that faculty, and was not Madame Blavatsky so far advanced in Arhatship as to be able to remember what in a former Kalpa she knew as Madame Βλαβατσκία? Let others suggest other solutions; a true Buddhist, like myself, ac-

quainted with the *iddhis*, and the mysterious working of psychic faculties and forces, can have no difficulty in accounting for the presence of the *Kakothodaimon* in Madame Blavatsky's books.

As Mr. Sinnett seems to find it hard to deny any of my facts or controvert any of the arguments based on them, he has recourse to the favourite expedient of discrediting or abusing the counsel for true Buddhism. He says that I have no right to speak with authority. I have never claimed to speak with authority. Far from it! I simply speak with facts and arguments. Facts require no authority nor laws of logic, whether inductive or deductive. In my article on 'Esoteric Buddhism,' I have based my case on nothing but facts and arguments. If Mr. Sinnett will prove my facts wrong, I shall be most grateful and surrender them at once. If he can show that my arguments offend against the laws of logic, I withdraw them without a pang. I never claimed to be a Pope or a Mahâtma. Mr. Sinnett appeals to the authority of 'native scholars,' and he assures us that he has heard 'native scholars' at Benares and elsewhere discussing my comments on Indian philosophy. Of course he means that they were discussing them unfavourably. I do not doubt the fact, but Mr. Sinnett does not give us the names of the 'native scholars,' nor inform us in what language their discussion took place. Now there are 'native scholars and native scholars,' but even the most learned among them would not claim any infallible authority. I know many native scholars and have had frequent communications with them by letter. I have often expressed my admiration for the knowledge of some of them, particularly of those who are specialists and

know one book or one subject only, but thoroughly. I have had controversies with some of them, and nothing could be more pleasant and courteous than their manner of arguing. I differ from them on some points, and they differ from me. I must therefore leave it to a Sanskrit scholar like Mr. Sinnett to judge between us, and to determine who is right and who is wrong; but he must not imagine that he can frighten me or my readers by appeals to unknown and anonymous 'native scholars.' If 'native scholars' have declared my contention that there is no longer any secret about Sanskrit literature to be *ludicrous*, may I remind Mr. Sinnett that he has accidentally forgotten to prove his major premiss that anything that seems ludicrous to any native scholar is *ipso facto* untrue.

Mr. Sinnett has taken the opportunity of giving, at the end of his 'Rejoinder,' a specimen of what he means by Esoteric Buddhism. This is a grave indiscretion on his part, and if any native scholar or Mahâtma confided it to him, and it did not rather come from his own head, the consequences of such an indiscretion may become very serious to him and his followers, whoever they may be.

It is a well-known and to my mind a very significant episode in Buddha's life that he dies as an old man after having eaten a meal of boar's flesh offered him by a friend. With a man like Buddha, who was above the prejudices of the Brahmans, there is no harm in this, but as it lends itself to ridicule it has always seemed to me to speak very well for the veracity of his disciples that they should have stated this fact quite plainly. But Mr. Sinnett has been initiated by Mahâtmas, and he tells us that the roast

pork of which Buddha partook was not roast pork at all, but was meant as a symbol of Esoteric Knowledge, derived from the Boar avatar of Vishnu, and that this avatar was an elaborate allegory which represents the incarnate god lifting the earth out of the waters with his tusks—a transaction which Wilson in his translation of the Vishnu Purâna explains as representing the extrication of the world from the deluge of iniquity by the rites of religion. Dried boar's flesh stands, as Mr. Sinnett assures us, for esoteric knowledge when prepared for popular use, and reduced to a form in which it could be taught to the multitude. It was owing to the daring attempt of Buddha to popularize his esoteric wisdom that Buddhistic enterprise came to an end. If Buddha died of that attempt, no one of lesser authority than himself, we are told, must take the responsibility of giving out occult secrets.

Mr. Sinnett is evidently running a great risk. He has disregarded this very warning. He has swallowed roast pork, or, what, according to him, is the same, he has ventured to expound esoteric mysteries. All we can hope for is that his digestion may prove stronger than that of Buddha, and that he will never repeat so dangerous an experiment, even though he meant it for the benefit of those who, like myself, 'worship the letter that killeth and are apt to lose sight of common sense.' Poor Dr. Rhys Davids, who, as Mr. Sinnett maintains, has given currency to the ludicrous misconception as to Buddha having eaten real roast pork, instead of having swallowed the Boar who in the Vishnu Purâna is said to have extricated the world from the deluge of iniquity, may incur even

greater penalties, particularly if, with most Sanskrit scholars, native or otherwise, he should commit the still greater heresy of maintaining that the Vishnu Purâna did not even exist in Buddha's time, and that therefore Buddha must have swallowed bona fide pork, and not a merely esoteric boar.

# THE ALLEGED SOJOURN OF CHRIST IN INDIA[1].

ÆNEAS SYLVIUS, afterwards Pope Pius the Second, 1458–64, when on a visit to England, was anxious to see with his own eyes the barnacle geese that were reported to grow on trees, and, being supposed to be vegetable rather than animal, were allowed to be eaten during Lent. He went as far as Scotland to see them, but arrived there he was told that he must go further, to the Orchades, if he wished to see these miraculous geese. He seemed rather provoked at this, and, complaining that miracles would always flee further and further, he gave up his goose chase (*didicimus miracula semper remotius fugere*).

Since his time, the number of countries in which miracles and mysteries could find a safe hiding-place has been much reduced. If there were a single barnacle goose left in the Orchades, i. e. the Orkney Islands, tourists would by this time have given a good account of it. There are few countries left now beyond the reach of steamers or railways, and if there is a spot never trodden by a European foot, that is the very spot which is sure to be fixed upon by some adventurous members of the Alpine Club for their next expedition. Even Central Asia and Central

[1] *Nineteenth Century*, October, 1894.

Africa are no longer safe, and hence, no doubt, the great charm which attaches to a country like Tibet, now almost the only country some parts of which are still closed against European explorers. It was in Tibet, therefore, that Madame Blavatsky met her Mahâtmas, who initiated her in the mysteries of Esoteric Buddhism. Mr. Sinnett claims to have followed in her footsteps, but has never described his or her route. Of course, if Madame Blavatsky and Mr. Sinnett had only told us by what passes they entered Tibet from India, at what stations they halted, and in what language they communicated with the Mahâtmas, it would not be courteous to ask any further questions. That there are Mahâtmas in India and Tibet no one would venture to deny. The only doubt is whether these real Mahâtmas know, or profess to know, anything beyond what they can, and what we can, learn from their sacred literature. If so, they have only to give the authorities to which they appeal for their esoteric knowledge, and we shall know at once whether they are right or wrong. Their Sacred Canon is accessible to us as it is to them, and we could, therefore, very easily come to an understanding with them as to what they mean by Esoteric Buddhism. Their Sacred Canon exists in Sanskrit, in Chinese, and in Tibetan, and no Sacred Canon is so large and has at the same time been so minutely catalogued as that of the Buddhists in India, China, or Tibet.

But though certain portions of Tibet, and particularly the capital (Lassa), are still inaccessible, at least to English travellers from India, other portions of it, and the countries between it and India, are becoming more and more frequented by adventurous tourists. It

would therefore hardly be safe to appeal any longer to unknown Mahâtmas, or to the monks of Tibetan monasteries, for wild statements about Buddhism, esoteric or otherwise, for a letter addressed to these monasteries, or to English officials in the neighbourhood, would at once bring every information that could be desired. Where detection was so easy, it is almost impossible to believe that a Russian traveller, M. Notovitch, who has lately published a 'Life of Christ' dictated to him by Buddhist priests in the Himis Monastery, near Leh, in Ladakh, should, as his critics maintain, have invented not only the whole of this *Vie inconnue de Jésus-Christ*, but the whole of his journey to Ladakh. It is no doubt unfortunate that M. Notovitch lost the photographs which he took on the way, but such a thing may happen, and if an author declares that he has travelled from Kashmir to Ladakh one can hardly summon courage to doubt his word. It is certainly strange that letters should have been received not only from missionaries, but lately from English officers also passing through Leh, who, after making careful inquiries on the spot, declare that no Russian gentleman of the name of Notovitch ever passed through Leh, and that no traveller with a broken leg was ever nursed in the monastery of Himis. But M. Notovitch may have travelled in disguise, and he will no doubt be able to prove through his publisher, M. Paul Ollendorf, how both the Moravian missionaries and the English officers were misinformed by the Buddhist priests of the monastery of Leh. The monastery of Himis has often been visited, and there is a very full description of it in the works of the brothers Schlagintweit on Tibet.

But, taking it for granted that M. Notovitch is a gentleman and not a liar, we cannot help thinking that the Buddhist monks of Ladakh and Tibet must be wags, who enjoy mystifying inquisitive travellers, and that M. Notovitch fell far too easy a victim to their jokes. Possibly, the same excuse may apply to Madame Blavatsky, who was fully convinced that her friends, the Mahâtmas of Tibet, sent her letters to Calcutta, not by post, but through the air, letters which she showed to her friends, and which were written, not on Mahâtmic paper and with Mahâtmic ink, but on English paper and with English ink. Be that as it may, M. Notovitch is not the first traveller in the East to whom Brâhmans or Buddhists have supplied, for a consideration, the information and even the manuscripts which they were in search of. Wilford's case ought to have served as a warning, but we know it did not serve as a warning to M. Jacolliot when he published his *Bible dans l'Inde* from Sanskrit originals, supplied to him by learned Pandits at Chandranagor. Madame Blavatsky, if I remember rightly, never even pretended to have received Tibetan manuscripts, or, if she had, neither she nor Mr. Sinnett has ever seen fit to publish either the text or an English translation of these treasures.

But M. Notovitch, though he did not bring the manuscripts home, at all events saw them, and not pretending to a knowledge of Tibetan, had the Tibetan text translated by an interpreter, and has published seventy pages of it in French in his *Vie inconnue de Jésus-Christ*. He was evidently prepared for the discovery of a Life of Christ among the Buddhists. Similarities between Christianity and Buddhism have

frequently been pointed out of late, and the idea that Christ was influenced by Buddhist doctrines has more than once been put forward by popular writers. The difficulty has hitherto been to discover any real historical channel through which Buddhism could have reached Palestine at the time of Christ. M. Notovitch thinks that the manuscript which he found at Himis explains the matter in the simplest way. There is no doubt, as he says, a gap in the life of Christ, say from His fifteenth to His twenty-ninth year. During that very time the new Life found in Tibet asserts that Christ was in India, that He studied Sanskrit and Pâli, that He read the Vedas and the Buddhist Canon, and then returned through Persia to Palestine to preach the Gospel. If we understand M. Notovitch rightly, this Life of Christ was taken down from the mouths of some Jewish merchants who came to India immediately after the Crucifixion (p. 237). It was written down in Pâli, the sacred language of Southern Buddhism; the scrolls were afterwards brought from India to Nepaul and Makhada (*quaere* Magadha) about A. D. 200 (p. 236), and from Nepaul to Tibet, and are at present carefully preserved at Lassa. Tibetan translations of the Pâli text are found, he says, in various Buddhist monasteries, and, among the rest, at Himis. It is these Tibetan manuscripts which were translated at Himis for M. Notovitch while he was laid up in the monastery with a broken leg, and it is from these manuscripts that he has taken his new Life of Jesus Christ and published it in French, with an account of his travels. This volume, which has already passed through several editions in France, is soon to be translated into English.

There is a certain plausibility about all this. The language of Magadha, and of Southern Buddhism in general, was certainly Pâli, and Buddhism reached Tibet through Nepaul. But M. Notovitch ought to have been somewhat startled and a little more sceptical when he was told that the Jewish merchants who arrived in India immediately after the Crucifixion knew not only what had happened to Christ in Palestine, but also what had happened to Jesus, or Issa, while He spent fifteen years of His life among the Brâhmans and Buddhists in India, learning Sanskrit and Pâli, and studying the Vedas and the Tripiṭaka. With all their cleverness the Buddhist monks would have found it hard to answer the question, how these Jewish merchants met the very people who had known Issa as a casual student of Sanskrit and Pâli in India —for India is a large term—and still more, how those who had known Issa as a simple student in India, saw at once that He was the same person who had been put to death under Pontius Pilate. Even His name was not quite the same. His name in India is said to have been *Issa*, very like the Arabic name *Îsâ'l Masîh*, Jesus, the Messiah, while, strange to say, the name of Pontius Pilate seems to have remained unchanged in its passage from Hebrew to Pâli, and from Pâli to Tibetan. We must remember that part of Tibet was converted to Mohammedanism. So much for the difficulty as to the first composition of the Life of Issa in Pâli, the joint work of Jewish merchants and the personal friends of Christ in India, whether in Sind or at Benares. Still greater, however, is the difficulty of the Tibetan translation of that Life having been preserved for so many centuries without ever

being mentioned. If M. Notovitch had been better acquainted with the Buddhist literature of Tibet and China, he would never have allowed his Buddhist hosts to tell him that this Life of Jesus was well known in Tibetan literature, though read by the learned only. We possess excellent catalogues of manuscripts and books of the Buddhists in Tibet and in China. A complete catalogue of the Tripiṭaka or the Buddhist Canon in Chinese has been translated into English by a pupil of mine, the Rev. Bunyiu Nanjio, M.A., and published by the Clarendon Press in 1883. It contains no less than 1,662 entries. The Tibetan Catalogue is likewise a most wonderful performance, and has been published in the *Asiatic Researches*, vol. xx, by Csoma Körösi, the famous Hungarian traveller, who spent years in the monasteries of Tibet and became an excellent Tibetan scholar. It has lately been republished by M. Féer in the *Annales du Musée Guimet*. This Catalogue is not confined to what we should call sacred or canonical books, it contains everything that was considered old and classical in Tibetan literature. There are two collections, the Kandjur and the Tandjur. The Kandjur consists of 108 large volumes, arranged in seven divisions:—

1. Dulva, discipline (Vinaya).
2. Sherch'hin, wisdom (Pragñâpâramitâ).
3. P'hal-ch'hen, the garland of Buddhas (Buddhaavataṁsaka).
4. Kon-tségs, mountain of treasures (Ratnakûṭa).
5. Mdo, or Sûtras, aphorisms (Sûtrânta).
6. Myang-Hdas, or final emancipation (Nirvâṇa).
7. Gyut, Tantra or mysticism (Tantra).

The Tandjur consists of 225 volumes, and while the Kandjur is supposed to contain the Word of Buddha, the Tandjur contains many books on grammar, philosophy, &c., which, though recognized as part of the Canon, are in no sense sacred.

In the Tandjur, therefore, if not in the Kandjur, the story of Issa ought to have its place, and if M. Notovitch had asked his Tibetan friends to give him at least a reference to that part of the Catalogue where this story might be found, he would at once have discovered that they were trying to dupe him. Two things in their account are impossible, or next to impossible. The first, that the Jews from Palestine who came to India in about 35 A.D. should have met the very people who had known Issa when he was a student at Benares; the second, that this Sûtra of Issa, composed in the first century of our era, should not have found a place either in the Kandjur or in the Tandjur.

It might, of course, be said, Why should the Buddhist monks of Himis have indulged in this mystification?—but we know as a fact that Pandits in India, when hard pressed, have allowed themselves the same liberty with such men as Wilford and Jacolliot; why should not the Buddhist monks of Himis have done the same for M. Notovitch, who was determined to find a Life of Jesus Christ in Tibet? If this explanation, the only one I can think of, be rejected, nothing would remain but to accuse M. Notovitch, not simply of a *mauvaise plaisanterie*, but of a disgraceful fraud; and that seems a strong measure to adopt towards a gentleman who represents himself as on friendly terms with Cardinal Rotelli, M. Jules Simon, and E. Renan.

And here I must say that if there is anything that might cause misgivings in our mind as to M. Notovitch's trustworthiness, it is the way in which he speaks of his friends. When a cardinal at Rome dissuades him from publishing his book, and also kindly offers to assist him, he hints that this was simply a bribe, and that the cardinal wished to suppress the book. Why should he? If the story of Issa were historically true, it would remove many difficulties. It would show once for all that Jesus was a real and historical character. The teaching ascribed to him in Tibet is much the same as what is found in the Gospels, and if there are some differences, if more particularly the miraculous element is almost entirely absent, a cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church would always have the tradition of the Church to rest on, and would probably have been most grateful for the solid historical framework supplied by the Tibetan Life.

M. Notovitch is equally uncharitable in imputing motives to the late M. Renan, who seems to have received him most kindly, and to have offered to submit his discovery to the Academy. M. Notovitch says that be never called on Renan again, but actually waited for his death, because he was sure that M. Renan would have secured the best part of the credit for himself, leaving to M. Notovitch nothing but the good luck of having discovered the Tibetan manuscript at Himis. Whatever else Renan was, he certainly was far from jealous, and he would have acted towards M. Notovitch in the same spirit with which he welcomed the discoveries which Hamdy Bey lately made in Syria on the very ground which had been explored before by Renan himself. Many travellers who discover

manuscripts, or inscriptions, or antiquities, are too apt to forget how much they owe to good luck and to the spades of their labourers, and that, though a man who disinters a buried city may be congratulated on his devotion and courage and perseverance, he does not thereby become a scholar or antiquary. The name of the discoverer of the Rosetta stone is almost forgotten, the name of the decipherer will be remembered for ever.

The worst treatment, however, is meted out to the missionaries in Tibet. It seems that they have written to say that M. Notovitch had never broken his leg or been nursed in the monastery of Himis. This is a point that can easily be cleared up, for there are at the present moment a number of English officers at Leh, and there is the doctor who either did or did not set the traveller's leg. M. Notovitch hints that the Moravian missionaries at Leh are distrusted by the people, and that the monks would never have shown them the manuscript containing the Life of Issa. Again I say, why not? If Issa was Jesus Christ, either the Buddhist monks and the Moravian missionaries would have seen that they both believed in the same teacher, or they might have thought that this new Life of Issa was even less exposed to objections than the Gospel-story. But the worst comes at the end. 'How can I tell,' he writes, 'that these missionaries have not themselves taken away the documents of which I saw the copies at the Himis monastery?' But how could they, if the monks never showed them these manuscripts? M. Notovitch goes even further. 'This is simply a supposition of my own,' he writes; 'but, if it is true, only the copies have been made

to disappear, and the originals have remained at Lassa. . . . I propose to start at the end of the present year for Tibet, in order to find the original documents having reference to the life of Jesus Christ. I hope to succeed in this undertaking in spite of the wishes of the missionaries, for whom, however, I have never ceased to profess the profoundest respect.' Any one who can hint that these missionaries may have stolen and suppressed the only historical Life of Christ which is known to exist, and nevertheless express the profoundest respect for them, must not be surprised if the missionaries and their friends retaliate in the same spirit. We still prefer to suppose that M. Notovitch, like Lieutenant Wilford, like M. Jacolliot, like Madame Blavatsky and Mr. Sinnett, was duped. It is pleasanter to believe that Buddhist monks can at times be wags, than that M. Notovitch was a rogue.

All this, no doubt, is very sad. How long have we wished for a real historical Life of Christ without the legendary halo, written, not by one of His disciples, but by an independent eye-witness who had seen and heard Christ during the three years of His active life, and who had witnessed the Crucifixion and whatever happened afterwards! And now, when we seemed to have found such a Life, written by an eye-witness of His death, and free as yet from any miraculous accretions, it turns out to be an invention of a Buddhist monk at Himis, or, as others would have it, a fraud committed by an enterprising traveller and a bold French publisher. We must not lose patience. In these days of unexpected discoveries in Egypt and elsewhere, everything is possible. There is now at Vienna a fragment of the Gospel-story more ancient

than the text of St. Mark. Other things may follow. Only let us hope that if such a Life were ever to be discovered, the attitude of Christian theologians would not be like that which M. Notovitch suspects on the part of an Italian cardinal or of the Moravian missionaries at Himis, but that the historical Christ, though different from the Christ of the Gospels, would be welcomed by all who can believe in His teaching, even without the help of miracles.

It is curious that at the very time I was writing this paper I received a letter from an English lady dated Leh, Ladakh, June 29, 1894. She writes:—

'We left Leh two days ago, having enjoyed our stay there so much! There had been only one English lady here for over three years. Two German ladies live there, missionaries, a Mr. and Mrs. Weber, a girl, and another English missionary. They have only twenty Christians, though it has been a mission-station for seven years. We saw a polo match which was played down the principal street. Yesterday we were at the great Himis monastery, the largest Buddhist monastery up here—800 Lamas. Did you hear of a Russian who could not gain admittance to the monastery in any way, but at last broke his leg outside, and was taken in? His object was to copy a Buddhist Life of Christ which is there. He says he got it, and has published it since in French. There is not a single word of truth in the whole story! There has been no Russian there. No one has been taken into the Seminary for the past fifty years with a broken leg! There is no Life of Christ there at all! It is dawning on me that people who in England profess to have been living in Buddhist monasteries in Tibet and to have learnt there the mysteries of *Esoteric Buddhism* are frauds. The monasteries one and all are the most filthy places. I have asked many travellers whom I have met, and they all tell the same story. They acknowledge that perhaps at the Lama University at Lassa it may be better, but no Englishman is allowed there. Captain Bower (the discoverer of the famous Bower MS.) did his very best to get there, but failed.... We are roughing it now very much. I have not tasted bread for five weeks, and shall not for two months more. We have "chappaties" instead. We rarely get any butter. We carry a little tinned butter, but it is too precious

to eat much of. It was a great luxury to get some linen washed in Leh, though they did starch the sheets. We are just starting on our 500 miles' march to Simla. We hear that one pass is not open yet, about which we are very anxious. We have one pass of 18,000 feet to cross, and we shall be 13,000 feet high for over a fortnight; but I hope that by the time you get this we shall be down in beautiful Kulu, only one month from Simla!'

# THE CHIEF LAMA OF HIMIS ON THE ALLEGED 'UNKNOWN LIFE OF CHRIST.'

By Mr. J. Archibald Douglas[1].

IT is difficult for any one resident in India to estimate accurately the importance of new departures in European literature, and to gauge the degree of acceptance accorded to a fresh literary discovery such as that which M. Notovitch claims to have made. A revelation of so surprising a nature could not, however, have failed to excite keen interest, not only among theologians and the religious public generally, but also among all who wish to acquire additional information respecting ancient religious systems and civilizations.

Under these circumstances it was not surprising to find in the October (1894) number of this Review an article from the able pen of Professor Max Müller dealing with the Russian traveller's marvellous 'find.'

I confess that, not having at the time had the pleasure of reading the book which forms the subject of this article, it seemed to me that the learned Oxford professor was disposed to treat the discoverer somewhat harshly, in holding up the *Unknown Life*

[1] *Nineteenth Century*, April, 1896.

*of Christ* as a literary forgery, on evidence which did not then appear conclusive.

A careful perusal of the book made a less favourable impression of the genuineness of the discovery therein described; but my faith in M. Notovitch was somewhat revived by the bold reply which that gentleman made to his critics, to the effect that he is 'neither a "hoaxer" nor a "forger,"' and that he is about to undertake a fresh journey to Tibet to prove the truth of his story.

In the light of subsequent investigations I am bound to say that the chief interest which attaches, in my mind, to M. Notovitch's daring defence of his book is the fact that that defence appeared immediately before the publication of an English translation of his work.

I was resident in Madras during the whole of last year, and did not expect to have an opportunity of investigating the facts respecting the *Unknown Life of Christ* at so early a date. Removing to the North-West Provinces in the early part of the present year, I found that it would be practicable during the three months of the University vacation to travel through Kashmir to Ladakh, following the route taken by M. Notovitch, and to spend sufficient time at the monastery at Himis to learn the truth on this important question. I may here mention, *en passant*, that I did not find it necessary to break even a little finger, much less a leg, in order to gain admittance to Himis Monastery, where I am now staying for a few days, enjoying the kind hospitality of the Chief Lama (or Abbot), the same gentleman who, *according to M. Notovitch*, nursed him so kindly

under the painful circumstances connected with his memorable visit.

During his journey up the Sind Valley M. Notovitch was beset on all sides by 'panthers, tigers, leopards, black bears, wolves, and jackals.' A panther ate one of his coolies near the village of Haïena before his very eyes, and black bears blocked his path in an aggressive manner. Some of the old inhabitants of Haïena told me that they had never seen or heard of a panther or tiger in the neighbourhood, and they had never heard of any coolie, travelling with a European sahib, who had lost his life in the way described. They were sure that such an event had not happened within the last ten years. I was informed by a gentleman of large experience in big-game shooting in Kashmir that such an experience as that of M. Notovitch was quite unprecedented, even in 1887, within thirty miles of the capital of Kashmir.

During my journey up the Sind Valley the only wild animal I saw was a red bear of such retiring disposition that I could not get near enough for a shot.

In Ladakh I was so fortunate as to bag an ibex with thirty-eight-inch horns, called somewhat contemptuously by the Russian author 'wild goats'; but it is not fair to the Ladakhis to assert, as M. Notovitch does, that the pursuit of this animal is the principal occupation of the men of the country. Ibex are now so scarce near the Leh-Srinagar road that it is fortunate that this is not the case. M. Notovitch pursued his path undeterred by trifling discouragements, 'prepared,' as he tells us, 'for the discovery of a Life of Christ among the Buddhists.'

In justice to the imaginative author I feel bound to say that I have no evidence that M. Notovitch has not visited Himis Monastery. On the contrary, the Chief Lama, or Chagzot, of Himis does distinctly remember that several European gentlemen visited the monastery in the years 1887 and 1888.

I do not attach much importance to the venerable Lama's declaration, before the Commissioner of Ladakh, to the effect that no Russian gentleman visited the monastery in the years named, because I have reason to believe that the Lama was not aware at the time of the appearance of a person of Russian nationality, and on being shown the photograph of M. Notovitch confesses that he might have mistaken him for an 'English sahib.' It appears certain that this venerable abbot could not distinguish at a glance between a Russian and other European or American traveller.

The declaration of the 'English lady at Leh,' and of the British officers, mentioned by Professor Max Müller, was probably founded on the fact that no such name as Notovitch occurs in the list of European travellers kept at the däk bungalow in Leh, where M. Notovitch says that he resided during his stay in that place. Careful inquiries have elicited the fact that a Russian gentleman named Notovitch was treated by the medical officer of Leh Hospital, Dr. Karl Marks, when suffering not from a broken leg, but from the less romantic but hardly less painful complaint—toothache.

I will now call attention to several leading statements in M. Notovitch's book, all of which will be found to be definitely contradicted in the document signed by the Chief Superior of Himis Monastery, and sealed with his official seal. This statement I have

sent to Professor Max Müller for inspection, together with the subjoined declaration of Mr. Joldan, an educated Tibetan gentleman, to whose able assistance I am deeply indebted.

A more patient and painstaking interpreter could not be found, nor one better fitted for the task.

The extracts from M. Notovitch's book were slowly translated to the Lama, and were thoroughly understood by him. The questions and answers were fully discussed at two lengthy interviews before being prepared as a document for signature, and when so prepared were carefully translated again to the Lama by Mr. Joldan, and discussed by him with that gentleman, and with a venerable monk who appeared to act as the Lama's private secretary.

I may here say that I have the fullest confidence in the veracity and honesty of this old and respected Chief Lama, who appears to be held in the highest esteem, not only among Buddhists, but by all Europeans who have made his acquaintance. As he says, he has nothing whatever to gain by the concealment of facts, or by any departure from the truth.

His indignation at the manner in which he has been travestied by the ingenious author was of far too genuine a character to be feigned, and I was much interested when, in our final interview, he asked me if in Europe there existed no means of punishing a person who told such untruths. I could only reply that literary honesty is taken for granted to such an extent in Europe, that literary forgery of the nature committed by M. Notovitch could not, I believed, be punished by our criminal law.

With reference to M. Notovitch's declaration that

he is going to Himis to verify the statements made in his book, I would take the liberty of earnestly advising him, if he does so, to disguise himself at least as effectually as on the occasion of his former visit. M. Notovitch will not find himself popular at Himis, and might not gain admittance, even on the pretext of having another broken leg.

The following extracts have been carefully selected from the *Unknown Life of Christ*, and are such that on their truth or falsehood may be said to depend the value of M. Notovitch's story.

After describing at length the details of a dramatic performance, said to have been witnessed in the court-yard of Himis Monastery, M. Notovitch writes:—

'After having crossed the courtyard and ascended a staircase lined with prayer-wheels, we passed through two rooms encumbered with idols, and came out upon the terrace, where I seated myself on a bench opposite the venerable Lama, whose eyes flashed with intelligence' (p. 110).

(This extract is important as bearing on the question of identification; see Answers 1 and 2 of the Lama's statement: and it may here be remarked that the author's account of the approach to the Chief Lama's reception room and balcony is accurate.) Then follows a long *résumé* of a conversation on religious matters, in the course of which the abbot is said to have made the following observations amongst others:—

'We have a striking example of this (Nature-worship) in the ancient Egyptians, who worshipped animals, trees, and stones, the winds and the rain' (p. 114).

'The Assyrians, in seeking the way which should lead them to the feet of the Creator, turned their eyes to the stars' (p. 115).

'Perhaps the people of Israel have demonstrated in a more flagrant manner than any other, man's love for the concrete' (p. 115).

'The name of Issa is held in great respect by the Buddhists, but

little is known about him save by the Chief Lamas who have read the scrolls relating to his life' (p. 120).

'The documents brought from India to Nepal, and from Nepal to Tibet, concerning Issa's existence, are written in the Pâli language, and are now in Lassa; but a copy in our language—that is, the Tibetan—exists in this convent' (p. 123).

'Two days later I sent by a messenger to the Chief Lama a present comprising an alarum, a watch, and a thermometer' (p. 125).

We will now pass on to the description given by the author of his re-entry into the monastery with a broken leg:—

'I was carried with great care to the best of their chambers, and placed on a bed of soft materials, near to which stood a prayer-wheel. All this took place under the immediate surveillance of the Superior, who affectionately pressed the hand I offered him in gratitude for his kindness' (p. 127).

'While a youth of the convent kept in motion the prayer-wheel near my bed, the venerable Superior entertained me with endless stories, constantly taking my alarum and watch from their cases, and putting to me questions as to their uses, and the way they should be worked. At last, acceding to my earnest entreaties, he ended by bringing me two large bound volumes, with leaves yellowed by time, and from them he read to me, in the Tibetan language, the biography of Issa, which I carefully noted in my *carnet de voyage*, as my interpreter translated what he said' (p. 128).

This last extract is, in a sense, the most important of all, as will be seen when it is compared with Answers 3, 4, and 5 in the statement of the Chief Superior of Himis Monastery. That statement I now append. The original is in the hands of Professor Max Müller, as I have said, as also is the appended declaration of Mr. Joldan, of Leh.

The statement of the Lama, if true—and there is every reason to believe it to be so—disposes once and for ever of M. Notovitch's claim to have discovered a Life of Issa among the Buddhists of Ladakh. My questions to the Lama were framed briefly, and with

as much simplicity as possible, so that there might be no room for any mistake or doubt respecting the meaning of these questions.

My interpreter, Mr. Joldan, tells me that he was most careful to translate the Lama's answers verbally and literally, to avoid all possible misapprehension. The statement is as follows:—

Question 1. You are the Chief Lama (or Abbot) of Himis Monastery?

Answer 1. Yes.

Question 2. For how long have you acted continuously in that capacity?

Answer 2. For fifteen years.

Question 3. Have you or any of the Buddhis monks in this monastery ever seen here a European with an injured leg?

Answer 3. No, not during the last fifteen years. If any sahib suffering from serious injury had stayed in this monastery it would have been my duty to report the matter to the Wazir of Leh. I have never had occasion to do so.

Question 4. Have you or any of your monks ever shown any Life of Issa to any sahib, and allowed him to copy and translate the same?

Answer 4. There is no such book in the monastery, and during my term of office no sahib has been allowed to copy or translate any of the manuscripts in the monastery.

Question 5. Are you aware of the existence of any book in any of the Buddhist monasteries of Tibet bearing on the life of Issa?

Answer 5. I have been for forty-two years a Lama, and am well acquainted with all the well-known

Buddhist books and manuscripts, and I have never heard of one which mentions the name of Issa, and it is my firm and honest belief that none such exists. I have inquired of our principal Lamas in other monasteries of Tibet, and they are not acquainted with any books or manuscripts which mention the name of Issa.

Question 6. M. Nicolas Notovitch, a Russian gentleman who visited your monastery between seven and eight years ago, states that you discussed with him the religions of the ancient Egyptians, Assyrians, and the people of Israel.

Answer 6. I know nothing whatever about the Egyptians, Assyrians, and the people of Israel, and do not know anything of their religions whatsoever. I have never mentioned these people to any sahib.

[I was reading M. Notovitch's book to the Lama at the time, and he burst out with, 'Sun, sun, sun, manna mi dug!' which is Tibetan for 'Lies, lies, lies, nothing but lies!' I have read this to him as part of the statement which he is to sign—as his deliberate opinion of M. Notovitch's book. He appears perfectly satisfied on the matter.—J. A. D.]

Question 7. Do you know of any Buddhist writings in the Pâli language?

Answer 7. I know of no Buddhist writings in the Pâli language; all the writings here, that I know of, have been translated from Sanskrit and *Hindi* into the Tibetan language.

[From this answer, and other observations of the Lama, it would appear that he is not acquainted with the term 'Pâli.'—J. A. D.]

Question 8. Have you received from any sahib a present of a watch, an alarum, and a thermometer?

Answer 8. I have never received any such presents from any sahib. I do not know what a thermometer is. I am sure that I have not one in my possession.

[This answer was given after a careful explanation of the nature of the articles in question.—J. A. D.]

Question 9. Do you speak Urdu or English?

Answer 9. I do not know either Urdu or English.

Question 10. Is the name of Issa held in great respect by the Buddhists?

Answer 10. They know nothing even of his name; none of the Lamas has ever heard it, save through missionaries and European sources.

Signed in the Tibetan language by the Chief Lama of Himis, and sealed with his official seal.

In the presence of us { J. ARCHIBALD DOUGLAS, Professor, Government College, Agra, N.-W. P. / SHAHMWELL JOLDAN, late Postmaster of Ladakh.

Himis Monastery, Little Tibet:
June 3, 1895.

(MR. JOLDAN'S DECLARATION.)

This is my declaration: That I acted as interpreter for Professor Douglas in his interviews with the Chief Lama of Himis Monastery. I can speak English, and Tibetan is my native language. The questions and answers to which the Chief Lama has appended his

seal and signature were thoroughly understood by him, and I have the fullest confidence in his absolute veracity.

SHAHMWELL JOLDAN
*(Retired Postmaster of Ladakh under the British Imperial Post Office).*

Leh : June 5, 1895.

This statement and declaration appear conclusive, and they are confirmed by my own inquiries, and by those made in my presence by the Abbot of Himis of some of the monks who have been longest resident in the monastery. There is every reason for believing that the conversations with the Lamas of Wokka and Lamayuru originated also in the fertile brain of M. Notovitch.

Neither of these reverend abbots remembers anything about the Russian traveller, and they know nothing of the religion of Issa (Christianity), or of any Buddhist sacred books or writings which mention his name.

I would here remark that the Lamas of Ladakh are not a garrulous race, and I have never known them indulge in high-flown platitudes on any subject. The casual reader would judge from a perusal of M. Notovitch's 'conversations' with them, that they were as much addicted to pompous generalities as the orators of youthful debating societies. The Lamas I have met are prepared to answer rational inquiries courteously. They do so with brevity, and usually to the point. They confess willingly that their knowledge on religious subjects is limited to their own religion, and that they know nothing whatever of religious systems unconnected with Tibetan Buddhism.

They do not read any languages but Sanskrit and Tibetan, and their conversations with foreigners are altogether limited to commonplace topics. The Chief Lama of Himis had never heard of the existence of the Egyptians or of the Assyrians, and his indignation at M. Notovitch's statement that he had discussed their religious beliefs was so real, that he almost seemed to imagine that M. Notovitch had accused him of saying something outrageously improper.

The exclusiveness of the Buddhism of Lassa seems to have instilled into the minds of the Lamaïstes an instinctive shrinking from foreign customs and ideas.

I would call attention especially to the ninth answer in the Lama's statement, in which he disclaims all knowledge of the English and Urdu languages.

The question arises, 'Who was M. Notovitch's interpreter?' The Tibetans of Ladakh competent to interpret such a conversation are leading men, certainly not more than three or four in number. Not one of them has ever seen M. Notovitch, to his knowledge. What does our imaginative author tell about this detail? On page 35 of the English edition, we are informed that at the village of Goond (thirty-six miles from Srinagar) he took a *shikari* into his service 'who fulfilled the rôle of interpreter.' Of all the extraordinary statements with which this book abounds, this appears to us the most marvellous. A Kashmiri *shikari* is invariably a simple peasant, whose knowledge of language is limited to his native tongue, and a few words of Urdu and English, relating to the necessities of the road, the camp and sport, picked up from English sportsmen and their Hindu attendants.

Even in his own language no Kashmiri villager would be likely to be able to express religious and philosophical ideas such as are contained in the conversations' between M. Notovitch and the Lamas. These ideas are foreign to the Kashmiri mode of thought, usually limited to what our author would term 'things palpable.'

We will take one or two examples :—

'Part of the spirituality of our Lord' (p. 33);
'Essential principles of monotheism' (p. 51);
'An intermediary between earth and heaven' (p. 51);

used in the 'conversation' with the Abbot of Wokka on the journey to Leh. The conversations at Himis abound in even more magnificent expressions :—

'Idols which they regarded as neutral to their surroundings' (p. 114);
'The attenuation of the divine principle' (p. 115);
'The dominion of things palpable' (p. 115);
'A *canonical* part of Buddhism' (p. 124);

and many others which readers will have no difficulty in finding.

Few things have amused me more, in connexion with this inquiry, than the half-annoyed, half-amused expression of the venerable Lama's face when Mr. Joldan, after a careful explanation from me, did his best to translate into Tibetan, as elegantly as it deserves, the expression, 'the attenuation of the divine principle.'

Apart, then, altogether from the statement made by the old abbot, there are ample reasons for doubting the veracity of M. Notovitch's narrative.

In my last conversation with the Lama we talked of the story of the broken leg. He assured me that

no European gentleman had ever been nursed in the monastery while suffering from a broken limb, and then went on to say that no European traveller had ever during his term of office remained at Himis for more than three days. The abbot called in several old monks to confirm this statement, and mentioned that the hospitality offered by the monastery to travellers is for one night, and is only extended for special reasons by his personal invitation. and that he and his monks would not have forgotten so unusual a circumstance.

That M. Notovitch may have injured his leg after leaving Leh on the road to Srinagar is possible, but the whole story of the broken leg, in so far as it relates to Himis Monastery, is neither more nor less than a fiction.

The Lamaïstes of Ladakh are divided into two great parties: the red monks, or orthodox conservative body; and the yellow monks, a reforming nonconformist sect.

On p. 119 of the *Unknown Life of Christ*, the Lama of Himis, the Chief Superior under the Dalai Lama of the red or orthodox monks of Ladakh, describes himself and his fellow monks as 'we yellow monks,' in one of those wonderful conversations before alluded to. It would be just as natural for his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, discussing the state of the English Church with an unsophisticated foreigner, to describe himself and the whole bench of bishops as 'we ministers of the Wesleyan Methodist body.' The Russian traveller might have remembered the dark-red robes and the red wallets of the monks who fill the monastery of Himis, unless it be that the Russian author is colour-blind, as well as blind to

a sense of truth. The religious differences of these two religious bodies are described with an inaccuracy so marvellous that it might almost seem to be intentional.

Regarded, then, in the light of a work of the imagination, M. Notovitch's book fails to please, because it does not present that most fascinating feature of fiction, a close semblance of probability.

And yet, if I am rightly informed, the French version has gone through eleven editions; so M. Notovitch's effort of imagination has found, doubtless, a substantial reward. In face of the evidence adduced, we must reject the theory generously put forward by Professor Max Müller, that M. Notovitch was the victim of a cunning 'hoax' on the part of the Buddhist monks of Himis.

I do not believe that the venerable monk who presides over Himis Monastery would have consented to the practice of such a deception, and I do not think that any of the monks are capable of carrying out such a deception successfully. The departures from truth on other points which can be proved against M. Notovitch render such a solution highly improbable.

The preface which is attached to the English edition under the form of a letter 'To the Publishers' is a bold defence of the truth of M. Notovitch's story, but it does not contain a single additional argument in favour of the authenticity of the *Life of Issa*.

A work of brilliant imagination is entitled to respect when it confesses itself as such, but when it is boldly and solemnly asserted again and again to be truth and fact, it is rightly designated by

a harsher term. The *Life of Issa* is not a simple biography. Such a publication, though a literary forgery, might be considered comparatively harmless. This *Life of Issa* contains two very striking departures from Christian revelation, as accepted by the vast majority of those who confess the faith of Christ. It practically denies the working of miracles, and it also gives a definite denial to the resurrection of Jesus. To the first of these denials is given no less authority than the words of our Lord, while the second more important article of faith is explained away very much to the discredit of the Apostles of the Early Church. M. Notovitch must remain, therefore, under the burden of what will be in the eyes of many people a more serious charge than literary forgery and persistent untruthfulness. He has attempted wilfully to pervert Christian truth, and has endeavoured to invest that perversion with a shield of divine authority.

I am not a religious teacher, and, great as is my respect for Christian missionaries, I cannot profess any enthusiastic sympathy with their methods and immediate aims. M. Notovitch cannot therefore charge me with 'missionary prejudice' or 'obstinate sectarianism.'

But, in the name of common honesty, what must be said of M. Notovitch's statement, that his version of the *Life of Issa* 'has many more chances of being conformable to the *truth* than the accounts of the evangelists, the composition of which, effected at different epochs, and at a time ulterior to the events, may have contributed in a large measure to distort the facts and to alter their sense.'

Another daring departure from the New Testament

account is that the blame of Christ's crucifixion is cast on the Roman governor Pilate, who is represented as descending to the suborning of false witnesses to excuse the unjust condemnation of Jesus.

The Jewish chief priests and people are represented as deeply attached to the great Preacher, whom they regarded as a possible deliverer from Roman tyranny, and as endeavouring to save Him from the tyrannical injustice of Pilate. This remarkable perversion of the received account has led several people to ask if the author of the *Unknown Life of Christ* is of Jewish extraction. Such inquiries as I have been able to make are not, however, in favour of such a supposition.

In many respects it may be said that this 'Gospel according to M. Notovitch' bears a resemblance to the *Vie de Jésus* by Renan, to whom the Russian author states that he showed his MSS.

We believe, nevertheless, that the great French author possessed too much perspicacity to be deceived by the 'discovery,' and too much honesty to accept support of his views from such a dubious quarter.

The general question as to the probability of the existence of any Life of Issa among the Buddhist MSS. in the monasteries of Tibet has been already so ably dealt with by so great an authority on these matters as Professor Max Müller, that I feel it would be presumptuous on my part to attempt to deal with a subject in which I am but slightly versed. I will therefore content myself by saying that the statements of the Lama of Himis, and conversations with other Lamas, entirely bear out Professor Max Müller's contention that no such Life of Issa exists in Tibet.

In conclusion, I would refer to two items of the

Russian author's defence of his work. The first is that in which he boldly invites his detractors to visit Himis, and there ascertain the truth or falsehood of his story; the second, that passage in which he requests his critics 'to restrict themselves to this simple question: Did those passages exist in the monastery of Himis, and have I faithfully reproduced their substance?'

Otherwise he informs the world in general no one has any '*honest*' right to criticize his discovery. I have visited Himis, and have endeavoured by patient and impartial inquiry to find out the truth respecting M. Notovitch's remarkable story, with the result that, while I have not found one single fact to support his statements, all the weight of evidence goes to disprove them beyond all shadow of doubt. It is certain that no such passages as M. Notovitch pretends to have translated exist in the monastery of Himis, and therefore it is impossible that he could have 'faithfully reproduced' the same.

The general accuracy of my statements respecting my interviews with the Lama of Himis can further be borne out by reference to Captain Chenevix Trench, British Commissioner of Ladakh[1], who is due to visit Himis about the end of the present month, and who has expressed to me his intention of discussing the subject with the Chief Lama.

Before concluding, I desire to acknowledge my sense of obligation to the Wazir of Leh, to the Chief Lama and monks of Himis Monastery, to my excellent interpreter, and to other kind friends in Ladakh, not only for the able assistance which they afforded

[1] This paper was written at Himis in June, 1895.

to me in my investigations, but also for the unfailing courtesy and kind hospitality which rendered so enjoyable my visit to Ladakh.

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## POSTSCRIPT

### By F. M. M.[1]

Although I was convinced that the story told by M. Notovitch in his *Vie inconnue de Jésus-Christ* was pure fiction, I thought it fair to give him the benefit of a doubt, and to suggest that he might possibly have been hoaxed by Buddhist priests from whom he professed to have gathered his information about Issa, i. e. Jesus. (Isa is the name for Jesus used by Mohammedans.) Such things have happened before. Inquisitive travellers have been supplied with the exact information which they wanted by *Mahâtmas* and other religious authorities, whether in Tibet or India, or even among Zulus and Red Indians. It seemed a long cry to Leh in Ladakh, and in throwing out in an English review this hint that M. Notovitch might have been hoaxed, I did not think that the Buddhist priests in the monastery of Himis, in Little Tibet, might be offended by my remarks. After having read, however, the foregoing article by Mr. Douglas, I feel bound most humbly to apologize to the excellent Lamas of that monastery for having thought them capable of such frivolity. After the complete refutation, or, I should rather say, annihilation,

[1] *Nineteenth Century*, August, 1896.

of M. Notovitch by Mr. Douglas, there does not seem to be any further necessity—nay, any excuse—for trying to spare the feelings of that venturesome Russian traveller. He was not hoaxed, but he tried to hoax us. Mr. Douglas has sent me the original papers, containing the depositions of the Chief Priest of the monastery of Himis and of his interpreter, and I gladly testify that they entirely agree with the extracts given in the article, and are signed and sealed by the Chief Lama and by Mr. Joldan, formerly Postmaster of Ladakh, who acted as interpreter between the priests and Mr. Douglas. The papers are dated Himis Monastery, Little Tibet, June 3, 1895.

I ought perhaps to add that I cannot claim any particular merit in having proved the *Vie inconnue de Jésus-Christ*—that is, the Life of Christ taken from MSS. in the monasteries of Tibet—to be a mere fiction. I doubt whether any Sanskrit or Pâli scholar, in fact any serious student of Buddhism, was taken in by M. Notovitch. One might as well look for the waters of Jordan in the Brahmaputra as for a Life of Christ in Tibet.

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## SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE

By Mr. J. A. Douglas.

Five and a half years have elapsed since the foregoing paper was written in the little wood-panelled guest-chamber of Himis Monastery in Western Tibet. The monastery and adjacent settlement are built on the western side of a rocky pass which climbs

upwards to the eternal snows. The pass above the Buddhist settlement is the haunt of numerous ibex, which are tamer than the rest of their kind; and higher up I saw a snow leopard, a rare animal even in this trans-Himalayan region. At the foot of the Himis valley flow the head-waters of the mighty Indus, which, after a roundabout route by way of the Chitral border, sweeps through the plains of the Punjab and the hot, low-lying country of Sind into the Indian Ocean. Remarkable and weird as are the surroundings of this great centre of Lamaism, or Western Buddhism, the interior of the Himis Monastery is still more fascinating on account of its dissimilarity to anything that the European who has not previously visited a Buddhist country has ever seen before. The few days that I spent at, and in the neighbourhood of Himis, were among the most interesting of my life hitherto, and even now it sometimes seems like a visit to another planet—as a journey to Mars, for instance, in response to an invitation forwarded by Dr. Nikola Tesla's wireless mega-telephone. The marvels of the Buddhist temple, its strange points of resemblance to a Roman Catholic cathedral of Southern Europe, the wonderful pictures and carvings, and the grotesque images occupied my attention very fully. There was one terribly graphic picture of the horrible tortures of the damned, which impressed itself upon my mind on account of the fiendish ingenuity of the conceptions. The huge yellow, savage dogs, chained up near the temple, were in keeping with their surroundings, though I succeeded, after repeated appeals to the appetite of one of these Tibetan hounds, in making friends

with him to the extent of allowing himself to be stroked. Even then there was something uncanny about it, for this animal did not express his fellow feeling by wagging his tail, as any ordinary canine would have done, but purred like a cat, or rather like a dozen cats in chorus.

In fact, there were so many interesting things to occupy my attention that I deferred the duty of chronicling the results of my investigations to the last evening of my stay.

Much rubbish has been written by travellers regarding the exclusiveness and hostility of Buddhist Lamas. I saw none of it; on the contrary, I was received everywhere with quiet, gentle courtesy. It was understood that I had come on a somewhat important mission to the Chief Lama, which might have accounted for mere toleration; but I found more than that, and from several Lamas met with real friendliness. This has always been my experience with the peoples of Western and Central Asia, that if an Englishman treats them with unsuspicious and frank geniality, they are very ready to reciprocate the feeling, and some are indeed flattered by the exhibition of friendship on the part of a European. Perhaps I have been exceptionally lucky. All the same, I believe that a great deal of the trouble that arises between Europeans and Orientals in unbeaten tracks is due to a want of consideration, of common courtesy, on the part of the former.

There was one young Lama, who seemed to be a kind of secretary to the Chief Lama, who was especially helpful and hospitable. He knew a little Hindustani, and by that means we could hold some

kind of conversation without the aid of an interpreter, and he seemed to be better educated from our standpoint than the older monks. In examining the library of the monastery, with its MSS. on wooden rollers and between wooden boards, the intelligence of this young Tibetan was very helpful to me, and with the assistance of my interpreter the task of inspection was rendered easy.

Early in the evening before my departure my secretary-friend brought into my little chamber a tankard of *'tchang*, or Tibetan beer, a present from the Chief Lama, which was not altogether unwelcome after some weeks of enforced total abstinence. 'Tchang has a slightly acid flavour, but is not at all unpalatable, and it is not too much to presume that this beer is free from arsenical impurities. My visitor departed after a brief conversation; and I sat down at my camp-table to write an account of my investigations. It was in the small hours of the morning that I finished my labours, and after a few hours' sleep I dispatched my article to the editor of the *Nineteenth Century*, and the signed depositions of the Lama and of my interpreter, with an explanatory letter, to my revered friend, Professor Max Müller at Oxford. These were given to a moon-faced Tibetan dâk-runner to hand to the postal officials at Leh, and I must confess to grave feelings of anxiety lest they should fail to reach their destination.

It can hardly be wondered at that I was anxious to send news to England of the results of my investigations at the earliest possible date, especially as the proof of the forgery was complete; but when further inquiries in Western Tibet produced other striking

instances of M. Notovitch's marvellous inventive powers, I was inclined to regret that I had not delayed dispatching these packets to Europe.

The good mission-people of Kashmiri and Ladakh, who first attempted to expose M. Notovitch, did that Russian adventurer good service by denying that he had ever visited Leh or Himis at all. There is no doubt whatever that M. Notovitch spent one night at Himis, and that ten days later (or within a fortnight after he had broken his leg, according to his own account) he walked into the mission dispensary at Leh, and asked to see Dr. Karl Marks, whom he informed that he was suffering from toothache. Dr. Marks made an entry of the date of the visit in his diary. The Tibetan who engaged some carriers for M. Notovitch remembers that he left Leh on that occasion, after two days' stay, on foot, with the intention of proceeding to Srinagar by way of Niniu and Dras. The crushing refutation of the details of the Russian 'discoverer's' story is the clear, straightforward statement of that most respectable old monk, the Chief Lama of Himis, who thoroughly understood the matter, inquiring most carefully into the details of the story told by M. Notovitch. He was naturally most indignant at the misuse of his name and authority, and at the manner in which Buddhism had been burlesqued and its teachings travestied.

Still more worthy of condemnation is the injury which this pretended 'Gospel,' this forged life of Christ, was designed to inflict on the Christian religion. It seeks to deny the divinity of Jesus Christ, the working of miracles, and the story of the Resurrection (which is described as a piece of de-

liberate deception on the part of the Apostles), and thus assails what are regarded by the vast majority of professing Christians as vital truths of Christianity. And yet there were a large number of religious people, in Europe and America, who accepted as genuine this marvellous 'discovery'; and one well-known religious paper, *The Christian*, published a discussion as to the authenticity of this 'New Gospel,' as it began to be called.

In India, M. Notovitch's publication was welcomed ecstatically by a certain class of Hindu, as a proof that the Christian faith was but a corrupt offshoot of that pure, ancient, original Brahmanism of which we read so much and really know so little. The genuine pundits, who are in the habit of mistrusting nearly all new literature, did not, as a rule, notice the 'discovery'; but the younger generation, who had received at Indian colleges what is known as an English education, read of and revelled in it. One Bengali paper greeted the 'find' as 'a clear proof that Christianity, like Buddhism, is simply an offshoot of Hinduism, and that Jesus Christ learnt His doctrines at the feet of Brahmans.' Further comment on the result of the forgery in India is needless. In justice to these Hindus it may be premised that few, if any, of them had ever seen the clumsy forgery. Their impressions of it were derived from reviews and book notices in European journals, and some of these were most absurd and ignorant effusions. The Gospel 'according to Notovitch' teems with absurdities and errors, which is hardly to be wondered at, as its author was not in any sense an Orientalist, and failed utterly to catch the keynote of Tibetan

Buddhism. The careful examination of the 'Gospel' which I made after leaving Himis revealed discrepancies too numerous to describe here. The conversations of M. Notovitch with the Lamas of other monasteries may be safely regarded as equally unreliable and imaginary, as visits to these places and talks with the superior monks soon convinced me. The exposure of the Notovitch forgery was accepted everywhere except in the case of an ingenious Hindu editor, who regarded my statements simply as 'a striking instance of the racial prejudices of the English against the Russ.' I had several letters from people in England and America thanking me for my work, and acknowledging that they had been deceived by M. Notovitch's book; but what repaid me most for my trouble was Professor Max Müller's verdict that I had proved the case to the hilt, and that M. Notovitch was 'annihilated.' In a private letter Professor Max Müller expressed the opinion that we should hear no more of M. Notovitch, who would see that 'the game was up,' so far as the chance of getting any acceptance for his daring imposture was concerned. Personally I feel almost grateful to him, as his forged 'Gospel' gave me a pretext and opportunity to visit the Buddhists of Western Tibet, and to become the guest of the Chief Lama of Himis Monastery—an experience well worth many journeys through snowy Himalayan passes, and far greater privations and hardships than those which I had to endure between the smiling valley of Kashmir and the inhospitable and rugged regions of the trans-Himalayan tableland.

# THE KUTHO-DAW[1]

IT has been said that through the introduction of railways, steamships, telegraphs, newspapers, and International Congresses, our terrestrial globe has shrunk to half its former size. We can now travel round the globe in less time than was formerly required for a journey from one end of Europe to the other. Within my own recollection, which goes back now to many years, a journey from Berlin to Paris or London was looked upon in Germany as a great event. The adventurous traveller before starting was expected to pay farewell visits to all his friends and relations, tears were shed in abundance, and no one would have started on so perilous an expedition without making his will and insuring his life. A journey to Egypt or India or America was an event discussed in all the papers. We know from Goethe what a grand thing it was supposed to be in his time to travel to Italy and explore its antiquities. To have travelled to Greece or to Constantinople, to have seen the Parthenon or St. Sophia, made a man a celebrity not only in his own native town, but all over Germany. Now three or four days bring us to Athens or Constantinople, and a small caique or a penny steamer takes us across the Bosphorus in a few minutes, and we are in Asia, on the very spot

[1] *Nineteenth Century*, September, 1895.

where Xerxes is supposed to have whipped the sea in his anger. A week takes us to America, a fortnight to India, and we travel all the time with perfect comfort and with hardly any effort or danger.

With the same ease, however, with which we travel to distant countries, people from distant countries are now beginning to come to us. I have had in my own study at Oxford, not only Turks, Arabs, Hindus, Siamese, Japanese, and Chinese, but I received only the other day a visit from one of the Blackfoot Indians, the first of that tribe who had ever set foot on English soil, a most interesting and intelligent man, who was bewailing to me the fate of his race, doomed, as he thought, to disappear from the face of the earth, as if Babylonians and Assyrians, Accadians and Hittites had not disappeared before. His name was *Strong Buffalo* (not *Buffalo Bill*), and a most powerful, determined, and sensible man he seemed. He reminded me of a young Mohawk who also used to deplore to me the fate of his race. He came to Oxford many years ago to study medicine. He came in his war-paint and feathers, but left in his cap and gown, and is now a practising physician at Toronto.

These visits of strangers from distant lands are often highly instructive: I extracted some knowledge of the Mohawk language from Dr. Oronyha Teka. One is thus brought in contact with some of the leading spirits all over the world. I have now, or have had, pupils, friends, and correspondents in India, Burmah, Siam, Japan, China, Corea, aye, even in the Polynesian and Melanesian Islands, in South America, and in several African settlements.

But here *surgit amari aliquid.* People in these

happy far-off countries have evidently less to do than we have, and the number of letters, newspapers, pamphlets, and books which the Indian post brings every week to my door is sometimes appalling. It would be physically impossible to acknowledge, much less to answer, all these letters and parcels, and I sometimes feel as if, in England at all events, there had been a shrinkage not only in space, but also in time. What used to be an hour is now scarcely half an hour, and a morning is gone before I have answered half the letters from every part of the world that lie scattered about on my table. A collection of the letters asking advice and help from me on the most heterogeneous and the most heterodox subjects, all beginning with the well-known phrase, 'Though I have not the honour of your personal acquaintance,' would form a most interesting and amusing volume. Still, there is both good and bad in all this. I have received most useful information and help from some of my unknown friends, and I trust that the unknown friends whose letters I have not been able to answer, whose books and MSS. I have not had time to examine, will forgive me if only they remember that the number of those whose personal acquaintance I have not the honour to possess is very large indeed.

And not only have letters and telegrams drawn the minds and hearts of men in every part of the world more closely together, but newspapers and reviews seem to have changed the world into one large debating club. If my friends were to see the Oriental newspapers which I have to read, or at all events to open and to glance at—I say nothing of German and French and Italian papers, I only think of the

journals from India, from America, from Japan, and from the Australian colonies—they would be surprised to see not only how telegrams are published in the Eastern papers almost before the time that the events happen in the West, but how every political question, every literary publication of any importance, is fully criticized in Bombay, in Tokio, or in Melbourne, often far more carefully and conscientiously than in the best of our own papers.

It is a curious sensation to see one's book not only praised, and praised in Oriental fashion, at Benares, but to receive a slashing criticism from an injured Buddhist who thinks that I have been unfair to Buddha, or a withering review from an enraged bishop who thinks that I have been too fair to him. Still, as one grows old one learns to bear all this, as the lotus leaf, to quote an Eastern phrase, is neither heated by the sun nor wetted by the rain. If in this way persons interested in literary, political, or philosophical work have been drawn together more and more closely, if a scholar has now to write and to hold his own, not only in Europe, but against critics in every part of the world, this process has culminated in what are known as *International Congresses*. Here people from all countries, of every colour and every creed, have really the honour of making personal acquaintances, and far be it from me to depreciate the good that has been done by these meetings. But again, they consume much valuable time and much valuable money. Think only of five hundred scholars travelling to England and spending a fortnight in London devouring science, literature, and a great many other things besides, and you have, if you reckon a working

day at eight hours, which I believe is now the correct number, no less than 56,000 hours taken away from the literary workshops of the world! If it were all rest and relaxation it would be different, but, as a matter of fact, a week or a fortnight of an international congress is about the hardest work that can fall to any mortal being in the pursuit of science.

The most celebrated of these international congresses was no doubt the so-called *Parliament of Religions* held at Chicago in 1893. There representatives of all the religions of the world were gathered together—Brahmans and Buddhists, Jainas and Parsees, Mohammedans and Chinese, people from Siam, Japan, China, and last, not least, Jews and Christians of every description and denomination. A Roman Catholic cardinal presided; the blessing was given one day by a rabbi, the next by an Anglican bishop, the next by a Buddhist priest, and last, not least, by an Italian archbishop; the Lord's Prayer was joined in by hundreds, nay, by thousands who were assembled there in their gorgeous costumes—in black silk, white lawn, scarlet brocade, yellow satin, with wonderful head-gears, golden chains and crosses; and—what was the most extraordinary of all—though everybody spoke up for his own religion, not one unkind word was said to disturb the perfect harmony of that wonderful meeting. Such a gathering was unique in the whole history of the world; it could not have taken place at any earlier time; nay, it may be said to have given the first practical recognition to the teaching of St. Peter, that in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him.

Nor is this first truly Oecumenical Council likely

to remain without results. Already several of the religions of the East begin to set their house in order, try to reform abuses that have crept into their churches, and challenge comparison with other religions, Christianity not excepted.

Of course, every religion has its weak points, every church has its abuses which must be reformed from time to time, and the followers of other religions are very quick in finding out these vulnerable points. But every religion has also its strong points, and it is far better that they also should be pointed out, and not the weak points only, and that they should be held up for the admiration and imitation of other religions.

If we hold that a religion should be judged by its fruits, can we wonder that the Mohammedans, yes, even the unspeakable Turks, should pride themselves on the fact that their religion has succeeded in stamping out drunkenness, which no other religion, not even our own, has been able to achieve, or that the Jainas should take some credit for never touching animal food? I had a Jaina dining with me only a few weeks ago, and I confess I envied him when he told me that during the whole of his life he had never eaten the flesh of animals, not even an egg, because it contained a germ of life. I do not say that we can measure the excellence of a religion by these outward tokens, by the mere keeping the outside of the cup and the platter clean; still, suppose that we Christians were the only total abstainers and vegetarians in the world, should we not point to this as one of the great triumphs of our religion? There can be no doubt that, for the future, Christians, and particularly

Christian missionaries, will have to see to the joints of their armour. You may have heard that not only the Mohammedans, but even the Buddhists in Japan, are going to send their own missionaries all over the world. There are mosques springing up in England, and I read of Buddhist temples in Paris and in America, where thousands go to listen to what is called the teaching of Buddha. There can be little doubt, to judge from Indian and Japanese papers, that these people have studied our Bible, our Old and New Testaments, far more carefully than we have their Tripiṭaka or their Koran.

It was for this very purpose, for the purpose of enabling missionaries to study the religion of those whom they wish to convert, that I published a series of translations of the *Sacred Books of the East*, which now amounts to nearly fifty volumes. If governments send out officers to explore the fortresses and to examine the strategic peculiarities of the frontiers of their neighbours, would it not be well that missionaries also, who are to conquer the whole world, should act as spies, should make themselves acquainted with the sacred books of other religions, the very fortresses of those whom they wish, if not to conquer, yet to convince and to convert?

Much has been written of late of the comparative merits and defects of the principal religions of mankind. Some of the Orientals who attended the Congress at Chicago have been lecturing before large audiences in the principal towns of America, and some of them are lecturing now in England and in Germany. There has been some skirmishing between these defenders of the Faith, most of them maintaining

that their religion is as good as any other, some that it is a great deal better. It would, however, be far too large and too serious a matter to attempt to institute here a comparison between the sacred books of the world, and to bring out the strong and the weak points of each.

I only intend to report on some very slight skirmishes that have lately taken place between the defenders of different religions of the world—skirmishes in which, so far as I can judge, little or nothing was really at stake, whatever the fortune of war might have been—and I shall then proceed to show in the *Kutho-daw* a kind of religious stronghold which in its way is certainly amazing, but which after hardly half a century begins already to show sad signs of decay, as one can see in the photographs lately sent home from Mandalay.

The skirmishes or reconnoitrings to which I refer were three, and they referred to matters of very small importance, nay, to my mind, of no importance at all. The questions that have been discussed were, (1) the relative age of the Sacred Books, (2) the number of followers that each religion may claim, and (3) the bulk of the sacred texts on which the various religions of the world profess to be founded.

Some religions have prided themselves on the age of their sacred books. The Brahmans more particularly represent their Vedas as far more ancient than any other Bible. Suppose it were so, would that in any way affect their value or prove their truth? I should think quite the contrary. Certainly, in the age in which we live, old age carries very little weight —old institutions are generally treated as old rubbish,

old men as old fogeys. We might therefore safely leave to the Brahmans the glory of possessing the oldest sacred book. They would soon find out that the walls of fortresses do not grow stronger by old age, and that books dating so far back as, according to some authorities, 6000 B.C., according to others 2000 B.C., must needs contain many things, many forms of thought, many modes of expression, that have grown not only old, but antiquated, and are no longer in harmony with the truth as we see it. Besides, what do we gain if we push back the date of the Old Testament or of the Veda ever so far? Are there not the higher critics who tell us that 2000 B.C. and even 4000 B.C. is quite a modern date compared with the dates of Egyptian and Babylonian monuments? And are there not still higher critics who assure us that even that ancient Egyptian and Babylonian civilization, as represented in hieroglyphic and cuneiform writings, must be looked upon as quite modern, and as the last outcome only of a much earlier and far more primitive civilization or non-civilization which has to be studied among the Palaeolithic savages of Tasmania or the Andaman islanders? We should gain, therefore, very little by a few thousand years more or less. If Mr. Tilak, in a very learned work lately published, claims 6000 B.C. as the very lowest date of Vedic literature, if Professor Jacobi insists on 4000 B.C. as the last concession that can be made, I still keep to the date which I originally claimed for the Hymns of the Rig-veda, namely, 1200 or 1500 B.C., and I always take care to add that even this date requires a certain amount of willingness on the part of historical critics. But even this more

moderate date goes far beyond that of the Old Testament, whether we accept the conclusions of the higher or the lower critics, and it seems to me far better to yield that point and let the Brahmans have the full credit—if it is any credit—of possessing the oldest, the most remote, and in consequence the most obscure, and the most difficult among the sacred books of the world.

Another equally useless skirmish has been that about the number of followers which each religion may claim. Here again two distinctions have to be made. If we ask for the number of human beings who have entrusted their souls to one or other of the sacred books as the safest vessel to carry them across this life, naturally the number of those who believed in the Veda, or the Old Testament, or the Buddhist Tripiṭaka during all the centuries that had elapsed before the rise of Christianity or Mohammedanism must have been much larger than the number of Christians or Mohammedans. And who could ever guess what may have been the number of Neolithic and Palaeolithic believers during the untold ages since the surface of the earth became cool and habitable? Remember that, according to Sir Charles Lyell, 270,000,000 years must have elapsed since the Cambrian period, and that traces of human life go back as far at least as the Post-Pleiocene period. Every pebble on the seashore may have been one of their fetishes, every shell we pick up or find petrified may have been a sacred totem of our primitive ancestors. From a purely statistical point of view, we should therefore again have to concede to Buddhists, to Brahmanists, and still more to those primitive

troglodyte ancestors of the whole human race, a considerable superiority in numbers; and we should probably do it without the least misgivings.

Still, it is strange that the superiority in numbers which has been claimed for Buddhism above all other religions seems to have greatly disturbed certain theologians; and as the numbers themselves could not well be disputed, attempts have lately been made to distinguish between real and purely nominal Buddhists, particularly in the vast empire of China. No doubt, millions of people who are classed as Buddhists in China and Mongolia have no notion of what Buddhism really is; they have never read a line of the Tripiṭaka, and could not pass an examination even in Olcott's *Short Catechism of Buddhism*. Their Buddhism often consists in no more than their going to the monastery for medicine, and, if that fails, for a decent burial. Still, such a distinction between real and nominal Buddhists is simply impracticable. Are there not Christians also who have never read a line of the Bible, and who could not pass an examination in the Catechism? It is difficult enough to have any trustworthy census whatever in so vast a country as China; a question whether a man or a woman was a real or a nominal Buddhist would convey no meaning at all to the shepherds in the steppes of Asia, and could elicit no answer, except perhaps a broad grin. Malte Brun used to say years ago: 'If a geographer means to be honest, he has to confess that there is no more reason for assigning to Asia 500 than 250 millions of inhabitants.' And though some progress has no doubt been made since his time, still Chinese statistics are guess-work and no more.

The worst of it is that some of the authorities whose statements are repeated over and over again have guessed with a purpose.

Missionaries, more particularly, are sorely tempted to guess the number of Buddhists and Mohammedans as small, that of the Christians, whether Protestant or Roman Catholic, as large. It is all the more creditable, therefore, to the Roman Catholic missionary societies that they should openly admit that, so far as they know, the number of Buddhists is as yet the largest. They claim 420,000,000 for Christianity, but allow 423,000,000 to Buddhism. Of these Christians, however, they claim 212,000,000 for themselves, and allow only 208,000,000 to the Reformed Churches, while the Mohammedans follow very close after with about 200,000,000. I attach very little value to these statistics, still less to the conclusions drawn from them. Truth fortunately is not settled by majorities. You remember the saying of Frederick Maurice, when he was told that in his views about eternal punishment he was in a minority, or, what is the same, unorthodox. 'I have often been in a minority,' he said, 'in this life, and I hope I shall be so in the next.'

If, therefore, in this second skirmish also we have been beaten, we have lost nothing. On the contrary, the fact that Buddhism counts as yet 3,000,000 more than Christianity may prove an incentive to our missionaries, nor need the Reformed Churches despair when by this time it counts only 4,000,000 less than the unreformed Churches. Here also there are worlds still to conquer, as the son of Philip used to say.

The third skirmish is even of less practical impor-

tance, though we shall see that it is interesting from a purely literary point of view.

The question has frequently been discussed of late, Which religion possesses the largest Bible? Most people would probably argue that the smaller a Bible, the better for those who have to study, to believe, and to obey it. But there is hardly a subject, if connected with religion, on which opposite opinions have not been held and defended with great ingenuity and obstinacy.

To count the words even of a book like the Old Testament is no easy undertaking, but the Rabbis, who are famous for their patient labours, have not shrunk from the trouble of counting the words in the Hebrew text, and they have found out, as Dr. Neubauer informs me, that the Old Testament in Hebrew contains 593.493 words, 2,728,100 letters, and 23,214 verses. This estimate is not made by taking the words of one page and multiplying it by the number of pages—a most uncertain proceeding—but by actual counting word for word.

These rabbinical labours, however, astounding as they are, have been surpassed by Christian students. I regret I cannot find out their names, but I see it stated that by counting each word in the Authorized Version of the Old and the New Testaments, they found out that the number of words of the whole Bible amounted to 773,692, that of the letters to 3,586,489, and that of the verses to 31,173. If this is correct—and who would venture either to doubt or to verify such labours?—the number of words in the English New Testament would be about 773,692 − 593,493 = 180,199. Here, however, one estimate is

made from Hebrew, the other from English, which naturally vitiates the calculation.

Much as one may admire such gigantic patience, the results produced by it are comparatively small. I shall only mention a few, such as they are. It has been found out that the eighth verse in the 118th Psalm forms the centre of the whole Bible; that the twenty-first verse of the seventh chapter of Ezra contains all the letters of the English alphabet, except the letter F; that the nineteenth chapter of the second book of Kings is identically the same as the thirty-seventh chapter of Isaiah; that the word *Lord* occurs 1,855 times, the word *reverend* but once, and the word *and* 46,277 times. This may seem very unprofitable labour, yet I must plead guilty of having gone through the same kind of drudgery myself. Before I could venture to edit the text and the ancient commentary of the Rig-veda, I had to make an *index verborum*, containing every word as many times as it occurred in this the oldest of all sacred books. The Rig-veda contains about 10,500 verses and 153,826 words, and the word *and*, the Sanskrit *cha*, occurs, unless I have added wrongly, which is not impossible, 1,149 times. I need hardly say that I did not go through all this drudgery from mere curiosity. It was a dire necessity. In order to edit and translate a text like that of the Rig-veda, which had never been edited before, it was absolutely necessary, as in the case of deciphering an inscription, to have every passage in which the same word occurs placed side by side before our eyes, so as to be able to find out which meaning would suit them all. Without such an *index verborum*, Vedic philology would have been impossible, and I flatter myself that

this *index* has served, and will serve for centuries to come, as the best and most solid foundation for a scholarlike study of these ancient hymns. I must not indulge in any more statistics, though I ought to add that two thousand years ago the native scholars of India had, like the Rabbis, counted not only the words, but even the syllables of their Rig-veda, and that they state the number of syllables to amount to 432,000. I have to confess again that I have not tried to check this account. What must strike every one in these statistical researches is the great amount of repetition in all the sacred books. Thus, while the number of words actually occurring in the Old Testament is, as we saw, 593,493, the number of separate words used again and again—in fact, the number of words in a dictionary of the Old Testament—is said to amount to no more than 5,642, thus showing that, on an average, every word was used in the Bible one hundred times. Comparing, then, the principal sacred books, we find that the Avestic texts, as we now possess them, are the shortest. They were not so originally, for we possess two only out of the twenty-one Nasks of which the Avesta originally consisted. The total of words in our present text amounts to 73,020. Then follows the Rig-veda, then the New, and then the Old Testament. I am sorry I have not been able to find out the exact number of words in the Koran, though I have little doubt that they too have been counted. The Koran, as far as the number of words goes, would probably stand between the Old and the New Testament.

If now in conclusion we turn to the sacred books of the Buddhists, we come at last to the *Kutho-daw*.

The sacred books of the Buddhists are perfectly appalling in their bulk. They are called the Tripiṭaka, the Three Baskets, and were originally written in Pâli, a vernacular form of Sanskrit. They have been translated into many languages, such as Chinese, Tibetan, and Mandshu. They have also been written and published in various alphabets, not only in Devanâgarî, but in Singhalese, Burmese, and Siamese letters. The copy in nineteen volumes lately presented to the University of Oxford by the King of Siam contains the Pâli text written in Siamese letters, but the language is always the same; it is the Pâli or the vulgar tongue, as it was supposed to have been spoken by Buddha himself about 500 B.C. After having been preserved for centuries by oral tradition, it was reduced for the first time to writing under King Vattagâminî in 88–76 B.C.[1], the time when the truly literary period of India may be said to begin. But besides this Pâli Canon there is another in Sanskrit, and there are books in the Sanskrit Canon which are not to be found in the Pâli Canon, and vice versa.

According to a tradition current among the Southern as well as the Northern Buddhists, the original Canon consisted of 84,000 books, 82,000 being ascribed to Buddha himself and 2,000 to his disciples. Book, however, seems to have meant here no more than treatise or topic.

But, as a matter of fact, the Pâli Canon consists, according to the Rev. R. Spence Hardy, of 275,250 stanzas, and its commentary of 361,550 stanzas, each stanza reckoned at thirty-two syllables. This would give us 8,808,000 syllables for the text, and 11,569,600

[1] *Dipavansa*, xx. p. 21.

syllables for the commentary. This is, of course, an enormous amount; the question is only whether the Rev. R. Spence Hardy and his assistants, who are responsible for these statements, counted rightly. Professor Rhys Davids, by taking the average of words in ten leaves, arrives at much smaller sums, namely, at 1,752,800 words for the Pâli Canon, which in an English translation, as he says, would amount to about twice that number, or 3,505,600 words. Even this would be ample for a Bible; it would make the Buddhist Bible nearly five times as large as our own; but it seems to me that Spence Hardy's account is more likely to be correct. Professor Rhys Davids, by adopting the same plan of reckoning brings the number of words in the Bible to about 900,000. We found it given as 773,692. But who shall decide?

What the bulk of such a work would be, we may gather from what we know of the bulk of the translations. There is a complete copy of the Chinese translation at the India Office in London, also in the Bodleian, and a catalogue of it, made by a Japanese pupil of mine, the Rev. Bunyiu Nanjio, brings the number of separate works in it to 1,662. The Tibetan translation, which dates from the eighth century, consists of two collections, commonly called the Kanjur and Tanjur.

The Kanjur consists of a hundred volumes in folio, the Tanjur of 225 volumes, each volume weighing between four and five pounds. This collection, published by command of the Emperor of China, sells for £630. A copy of it is found at the India Office. The Buriates, a Mongolian tribe converted to Bud-

dhism, bartered 7,000 oxen for one copy of the Kanjur, and the same tribe paid 12,000 silver roubles for a complete copy of both Kanjur and Tanjur.

What must it be to have to believe in 325 volumes each weighing five pounds, nay, even to read through such a Bible! True, the Buddhist Canon is full of repetitions, but at present we need only think of the number of volumes, of pages, and of words, whether repeated or not. It is not easy to realize such a number as 8,808,000 syllables, but we may try to do so, and then think of the Kutho-daw, which is a Buddhist monument near Mandalay in Burma, consisting of about 700 temples, each containing a slab of white marble on which the whole of this Buddhist Bible, the whole of these eight millions of syllables, has been carefully engraved. The alphabet is Burmese, the language is Pâli, the language supposed to have been spoken by Buddha. Well may the Buddhists say that such a Bible on white marble cannot be matched in the whole world. I am glad it cannot. Think of the fearful expenditure of labour and money. And what is the result? A small copy of the New Testament, which our University Press turns out for a penny a copy, is more useful, has more power for good in it, quite apart from its intrinsic value, than the whole of this gigantic structure which no one reads, nay, which but few people understand. The Kutho-daw is not an ancient monument. It was erected in 1857 by Mindon-min, the predecessor of King Thebaw, the last king of Burma. No one seems ever to have described this marvellous pile, and I confess that unless my correspondent, Mr. Ferrars, had sent me photographs of it, I should have found it difficult to believe in

this extraordinary monument of Buddhist piety and Buddhist folly.

To judge from these photographs, there are about seven hundred temples, forming together a large square, with a higher temple in the centre, visible from far and wide. Each temple contains a slab of white marble covered with inscriptions, possibly more than one, if the inscriptions contain, as is maintained, the complete text of the three Piṭakas. Over each slab there is an ornamental canopy in pagoda form, which renders photography difficult, but by no means impossible. Mr. Ferrars, a member of the Burma Forest Department, is quite ready to undertake the photographic reproduction of the complete text of the Tripiṭaka, if the Government or some learned society will bear the small expense that is required. He has been assured that the text, as engraved on the marble slabs, was critically revised and edited by a Royal Commission, consisting of ten learned men under the presidency of the famous Rahan, U-Nye-ya. It is stated that three copies of the same text were prepared at the same time on palm-leaves, and sent by the king to three European libraries. What libraries they were I have not been able to find out.

If a photographic reproduction could be made at a reasonable price, it would certainly seem desirable, though, from a specimen sent to me, I am a little afraid that some of the letters are no longer quite distinct. The signs of decay are visible all over the building; the moisture of the climate has begun to tell, and moss is growing on the walls and cupolas. What a confirmation of Buddha's teaching that all is

perishable and that all that has been put together will come apart again!

How much more real good might have been done if this pious and learned Buddhist king had been properly advised as to the best way of doing honour to the memory of Buddha! Buddhists in many parts of the world seem very anxious that the nations of Europe should gain a correct knowledge of the ancient religion of Buddha. In this they are quite justified. Some go so far as to send missionaries to convert the world. This seems rather too sanguine a plan; anyhow, before such attempts are made, it would certainly be desirable to spread a correct knowledge of Buddhism, and thus to counteract the mischievous misrepresentations of the great sage of Kapilavâstu, scattered broadcast by those who call themselves esoteric Buddhists. The importance of Buddhist literature for a comparative study of religions is now generally recognized, and for philological purposes also a scholarlike knowledge of Pâli is of very great importance.

It is a great pity that at Oxford there should be no chair of Pâli; and the true admirers of Buddha could hardly show their admiration in a better way than by helping to found a lectureship of the Pâli language and literature. The King of Siam has shown his reverence for the memory of Buddha by helping me to bring out a series of translations of the sacred books of the Buddhists. Is there no other admirer of the great sage to follow this noble example? Even a gigantic marble structure like the Kutho-daw crumbles to pieces, and the inscriptions remain silent in the wilderness. A learned and painstaking teacher of

Pâli, though he must not expect to gain any converts to Buddhism at Oxford, would certainly help to secure to Buddha that position among the wisest and best men of the world which belongs to him by right as the recognized guide and teacher of 423 millions of human beings—as a sage whose utterances even those who belong to another religion may read, mark, and inwardly digest, with real advantage to themselves—as one whom a former professor in this University declared to be 'second to One only.'

# BUDDHA'S BIRTHPLACE[1].

IT is strange to see how in our days the republic of letters extends its arms farther and farther, and how the same literary and archaeological questions are discussed in the journals of Japan, India, France, England, and Germany, difference of language having long ceased to be a barrier between the scholars of the principal countries of the civilized world. Hardly has a question been asked or a problem connected with oriental literature been started, when answers pour in from East and West, from North and South.

Here is the last number of the *Hansei Zasshi*, a monthly magazine, published at Tokio in Japan. It is generally written in English, but from time to time it contains articles in Russian and German also. The last number contains one article in French, or rather a speech delivered in French before a learned society at Tokio by a distinguished French savant, M. Sylvain Lévy. And what is the subject on which he addressed his Japanese audience? It is a pilgrimage which he performed to the newly discovered birthplace of Puddha, Kapilavâstu. In the sixth century B.C. this Kapilavâstu was the residence of the Sâkya princes and of Buddha's father, as we are informed again and

[1] *Blackwood's Magazine*, December, 1898.

again in the sacred canon of the Buddhists These Sâkya princes were what we should now call small Indian Râjahs, and the father of Buddha was the head of the family, and ruler of their principality. But though the name of the capital, Kapilavâstu, and the name of a large park belonging to it, Lumbinî, were well known to all students of Buddhism, the real situation of that once famous town had hitherto baffled all attempts at identification. General Sir Alex. Cunningham, a high authority on Indian archaeology, had indeed placed Kapilavâstu near the village of Bhuila in the Basti district of the North-Western Provinces; but this view was clearly wrong, and has by this time been given up by all competent authorities. The only scholar who long ago had fixed on the right locality was Vivien de St. Martin, who in his *Mémoire Analytique*, appended to Stan. Julien's translation of *Hiouen-thsang*, placed it rightly between Gorakhpur and the mountains of Nepal.

Little attention, however, was paid to this geographical conjecture, which dates from 1858, and it would perhaps have been impossible to place it altogether beyond the reach of doubt without a renewed examination of the *Voyages des Pèlerins Bouddhistes*—that is, the descriptions of the pilgrimages performed by Chinese Buddhists, such as Fa-hian in the fifth, and Hiouen-thsang in the seventh century. These two Chinese Buddhists, and many others like them, travelled from China to India, which was their Holy Land, and to Kapilavâstu, which was their Jerusalem. But even with the help of the minute details which these Buddhist pilgrims have left us of all they did and saw on their journeys, the

site of Kapilavâstu, the chief goal of their perilous travels, would probably have long remained uncertain but for the ingenuity of Surgeon-Major Waddell.

I may seem wrong in speaking so positively on this point, for there has been, and there still is, a heated controversy going on, and there are some very competent authorities who claim the merit of having settled the real site of Kapilavâstu, not for Major Waddell, or even for Vivien de St. Martin, but exclusively for Dr. Führer. To me it seems a case very like the discovery of Uranus. Professor Adams pointed out where that planet must be, and would be sure to be found. Leverrier took the telescope and found it. In much the same way Major Waddell, in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1896, p. 275, expressed his conviction that Kapilavâstu would be found not very far from a pillar discovered in 1893 in the Nepal Terai by a Nepalese officer, name unknown. The Major recognized it at once as one of the many pillars erected by King Asoka (third century B.C.) when that famous Buddhist sovereign visited the sacred places through which Buddha himself had passed. These places were commemorated by numerous pillars, monasteries, and other monuments of King Asoka's time. One of them was found buried partially in the earth near the village of Niglîva, about thirty-seven miles north-west of the Uska station on the North Bengal Railway, in the northern portion of the Gorakhpur district of the North-Western Provinces, and it was found in the very locality fixed on by Vivien de St. Martin. But this was not all. When the pillar was cleared of the soil and dust which encumbered it, it was found to contain an inscription

in the same alphabet and the same language which are well known from many other monuments erected by King Asoka in all parts of his kingdom. A paper impression of this inscription was taken by Dr. Führer and sent to Dr. Bühler, who published the four lines in the *Academy* of April 27, 1895. Imperfect as the inscription was, it declared distinctly that King Piyadasi, i.e. Asoka, in the fourteenth year after his consecration enlarged the stûpa of Buddha Konâkamana (Konâgamana) for the second time, and came himself to worship it. Nothing, however, was said as to the geographical position of Kapilavâstu being fixed by that inscribed pillar, and though it may be said that the topographical deductions were inevitable, yet simple fairness compels us to say that Major Waddell was the first to point out that this pillar in commemoration of Konâkamana was the same which Fa-hian[1] mentions in the fifth century, and Hiouen-thsang[2] in the seventh, and that, therefore, the site of Kapilavâstu must be in close neighbourhood of it, distant no more than one yo*g*ana, or about seven miles to the west, according to the statement of the Chinese pilgrims. This discovery was no doubt of great value, both geographically and historically, and it was more or less confirmed by a Tibetan book in the possession of Major Waddell, in which the shrines of Krakuk*kh*anda and Konâkamana are mentioned as situated near Kapilavâstu. All this is by no means

[1] Fa-hian, ed. Legge, p. 64, calls the Buddha Kanaka-muni.

[2] Hiouen-thsang (Julien, i. p. 316) calls him Kia-no-kia-meouni-fo. 'Dans ce stoupa,' he says, 'on a élevé une colonne, haute d'une vingtaine de pieds. Sur le sommet on a sculpté l'image d'un lion, et, sur le côté, on a gravé l'histoire du Nirvâna de Kanakamoouni.'

intended to diminish in any way the credit due to Dr. Führer in his subsequent labours on the spot. It is only meant to remind us that the topographical importance of the Konâkamana pillar as an ancient finger-post was pointed out for the first time by Major Waddell, and that it was he who suggested to the Government to send out a deputy (Dr. Führer) when his own services were required elsewhere.

After the site of Kapilavâstu had once been securely fixed, it became easy to see that the ground all around was covered by ruins of ancient stûpas, monasteries, villages, and towns. Very soon another of Asoka's pillars was found by Dr. Führer, and identified as that of Lumbinî. This Lumbinî was a well-known park close to Kapilavâstu, famous in Buddhist tradition as the garden to which the queen retired, when going to give birth to her first son, who was to become hereafter the founder of the Buddhist religion. That pillar also had been described by Hiouen-thsang, who mentions that in his time already it was broken in two pieces, a statement confirmed by Dr. Führer, who tells us that the top part seems to have been shattered by lightning. Hiouen-thsang does not mention that it contained an inscription, probably because the lower part of the pillar was no longer visible in his time. But that inscription, as now laid bare, leaves no doubt that the pillar was the identical pillar which was erected by Asoka, for it declares that 'King Piyadasi [Asoka], beloved of the gods, having been anointed twenty years, himself came and worshipped, saying, Here Buddha Śâkyamuni was born, and he caused a stone pillar to be erected, which declares, "Here the Venerable was born."' The very name

of the park, Luminî or Lumbinî, occurs in the injured part of the inscription, so that no doubt can remain that this was indeed the spot where Buddha first saw the light of the world, or, at all events, where King Asoka in the third century before Christ, and about three centuries after the birth of Buddha, was told that it was so. According to the Divyâvadâna, the guide who undertook to show the king the spots where Buddha had sojourned was Upagupta[1]. He began by conducting the king to the garden of Lumbinî, and extending his right hand he said, 'Here, O great King, was the Venerable [Bhagavat] born, and here should be the first monument in honour of the Buddha.'

After all this, scepticism would indeed seem unreasonable. That Asoka erected these commemorative pillars is known from Buddhist books and from the inscriptions on the pillars themselves. That they existed in the fifth and seventh centuries after our era is known from the itineraries of the Chinese pilgrims, Fa-hian, Hiouen-thsang, and others. Their existence even at a later time is attested by inscriptions left on the upper part of the column by later visitors, and therefore to doubt that they mark the real spots of Buddha's birth and early life would be over-conscientious even for the most critical of historians. It is true that the neighbourhood, as it is at present, is very different from what it is described to have been in Buddha's time. The Terai of Nepal is the most inhospitable part of India, and if the towns with their Buddhist monuments were not

[1] Waddell, 'Upagupta,' *J. A. Soc. Bengal*, 1897, p. 81; quoting Burnouf, Introduction, p. 340.

destroyed by warfare, they may well have been submerged and ruined by floods occasioned by the rivers which rise on the northern mountains and debouch on the plains, carrying everything before them and covering the ground with layers of mud, difficult to pierce by the explorer's spade.

That spade has become of late a kind of fetish for archaeologists. It is quite right that it should be worshipped, but its worship must not be carried too far. After the stûpas and pillars have been laid bare by the spade, what do they teach us, unless they can be made to speak again by their inscriptions? Nay, we may go a step further, for even when we know from their interpretation that this was the garden into which Mâyâ, the mother of Buddha, retired, and laying hold of the branch of a lofty Asvattha-tree, gave birth to the future Buddha, how does this help us to a proper understanding of Buddha's teaching, its antecedents in the past, and its true objects for the future? It is curious, no doubt, to know as a fact that Aryan life extended, even at that early time, so far east and north as Nepal, and that there was possibly a non-Aryan element among the first converts to Buddhism. But what is all that mere *entourage* compared with the Prince himself, who was to work such a complete revolution in the religious life of India—nay, of the whole East? It is that Prince and his thoughts that we want to know and to understand, and this can be done by a study of MSS. only, and by psychological analysis, not by digging, however indefatigably, with pickaxe and spade.

It would be narrow-minded to say that the ruins of the Terai teach us nothing. On the contrary, it

may be hoped that they will in time teach us a great deal, and reveal to us much of the outward circumstances of Buddhism, at all events at the time of Asoka in the third century. But, after all, the real ruins of that ancient religion must be dug up with the pen from MSS., whether in Sanskrit or in Pâli, and what has been dug up there will have to be sifted and arranged by such *piocheurs* as Burnouf, Oldenberg, Sénart, Rhys Davids, and others. Grateful as we are to such laborious searchers and diggers as General Cunningham, Major Waddell, Dr. Führer, and others, we should never forget that after all a spade is a spade, and that other hands and heads are wanted before stones can become monuments, true *monimenta* to remind us of the life that was lived in the ruins of Kapilavâstu and in the garden of Lumbinî.

There has been no lack of such labourers, coming to help from all parts of the world, each contributing his share towards the recovery of the birthplace of Buddha. Greek scholars have helped us to prove that Asoka was the grandson of Chandragupta, and that Chandragupta was Sandrokyptos, the contemporary of Alexander the Great. Here is our strong anchor for Indian chronology.

China has given us the heroic pilgrims who found their way across the dangerous mountain-passes and snowdrifts to their Holy Land, who stayed there for years studying the languages and customs of the country, and leaving us careful descriptions of all they saw from the Himalayan Mountains down to Ceylon.

It is to France that we owe Stanislas Julien, the great Chinese scholar, who translated for the first time the Travels of the Chinese explorers, which had

defied the scholarship of all former *sinologues*. To the same country we owe the light that M. Sénart has shed on the inscriptions of Asoka and on Pâli literature in general.

Germany also has contributed most valuable aid in the labours of the late Dr. Bühler, whose recent loss is keenly felt by all Sanskrit scholars, and more particularly by Indian archaeologists.

But the spark that at last lighted the train that had been so carefully laid by all these scholars came from Surgeon-Major Waddell, who with rare pluck searched the pestilential Terai of Nepal, and was the first to recognize the geographical importance of the pillar of Konâkamana, and to read on it what no one had read before him, 'This is the way to Kapilavâstu,' while Buddhists all over the world—in Ceylon, Burma, Siam, and China—have hailed this discovery with rapture. Several Buddhist scholars from France and England have set out on their scientific pilgrimages to the dangerous Nepalese Terai, and it was one of them, M. Sylvain Lévy, who on his return from Kapilavâstu delivered his eloquent discourse before an audience of faithful Buddhists at Tokio in Japan.

Let us hope that the Indian and Nepalese Governments will unite their forces in friendly rivalry, not, as it has been supposed, to dig up hidden treasures, but to lay bare by an army of spades whatever there may still be left of the soil once trodden by the feet of Buddha, and ornamented in the third century B.C. by the monuments erected by the Constantine of Buddhism, by Asoka, the grandson of Sandrokyptos, the ally of Alexander the Great.

# MOHAMMEDANISM AND CHRISTIANITY[1].

IT is at first a strange, but a decidedly pleasant, sensation when we live in the midst of a Turkish population to find how, on all ordinary subjects, their feelings are our feelings, and their thoughts our thoughts, and their motives our motives. They are doing what is right and what is wrong very much as we do. They are satisfied with themselves and ashamed of themselves just as we are.

When they speak about religion, which they do rarely, they will speak of God just as we do, as the Lord and Governor of the universe; as just and righteous, yet always merciful; and they will act as if they were strongly convinced that virtue will be rewarded and vice punished either in this life or in the life to come. They have a very strict regard for truth, and will respond to our confidence by equal confidence. Are these, then, the Turks, infidels, and heretics, we ask ourselves, for whom we used to pray? Is their religion false while ours is true; is their morality corrupt while ours is pure?

Their customs and social habits are no doubt different from ours, but they hardly ever become obtrusive or offensive to others. If their life under its good and its evil aspects may be taken as the

[1] *Nineteenth Century*, February, 1894.

result of their religion, we shall have to confess that these Turks and infidels and heretics really excel us on several very important points. The most important is that of sobriety. There is no force used to prevent drinking; and I am sorry to say that the upper classes, which everywhere abound in black sheep, are certainly no longer total abstainers. But the middle and lower classes are 'free, and yet sober.' If it is true, as a well-known English judge declared, that nearly all our crimes can be traced back to drunkenness, how can we help regretting that our religion and our clergy should not have been able to exercise the same salutary influence on the people as the Korán and the Ulemahs! How can we help wishing that they would teach us how to produce the same results in Christendom which they have produced during the 1,273 years that their religion has existed and has quickened the most torpid and lifeless parts of the world!

There is another point on which it is more difficult for strangers to form a decided opinion, but, if I may trust my Turkish friends, no Turkish Mohammedan woman leads an openly immoral life. Certainly such sights as may be seen in many European capitals are not to be seen at Constantinople. If the Mohammedan religion can produce two such results—and it seems hardly honest to ascribe all that is good in Mohammedan countries to other causes, such as climate or blood, and not to their religion—if it can cure these two cancers that are eating into the flesh of our modern society, drunkenness and immorality, it would seem to deserve a higher regard and a more careful examination than it has generally received

from us. With us the feeling of the multitude about Mohammed and Islam is still much the same as it was at the time of the Crusades and during the Middle Ages, though of late several weighty voices have been raised against the ignorant condemnation both of the Prophet and of his religion. Carlyle's essay on Mohammed, and Mr. Bosworth Smith's excellent work, *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*, have powerfully influenced public opinion. The old feeling of hostility against Islam was in its origin political rather than religious. Europe has never forgotten the cruelties perpetrated both in Asia and Europe by Mohammedan armies recruited not only from Arabia but from Mongolia and Tartary, and their violent invasion of the East and West of Europe still rankles in the hearts of many. Everything was believed of the armies of the Mahound, and in modern times the unspeakable atrocities in Bulgaria and Anatolia have revived the slumbering feelings of hatred among the great masses in Europe.

Still it was not always so, particularly in England, when 300 years ago it was for the first time brought into political relations with the Turkish Empire. There were periods in the history of England when the feeling towards Islam was more than tolerant. Queen Elizabeth, when arranging a treaty with Sultan Murad Khan, states that Protestants and Mohammedans alike are haters of idolatry, and that she is the defender of the faith against those who have falsely usurped the name of Christ[1]. Her ambassador was still more outspoken, for he wrote on the 9th of November, 1587: 'Since God alone protects His own,

[1] *Hist. Review*, July, 1893, p. 480.

He will so punish these idolaters (the Spaniards) through us, that they who survive will be converted by their example to worship with us the true God, and you, fighting for this glory, will heap up victory and all other good things.' The same sentiments were expressed on the part of the Sublime Porte, by Sinan Pasha, who about the same time told the Roman ambassador that to be good Musulmans all that was wanting to the English was that they should raise a finger and pronounce the Eshed, or Confession of Faith[1]. The real differences between Islam and Christianity were considered so small by the Mohammedans themselves that at a later time we find another Turkish ambassador, Ahmed Rasmi Effendi, assuring Frederick the Great that they considered Protestants as Mohammedans in disguise[2].

As for the atrocities charged against Mohammedan armies, it is for the historian to clear up this matter, and to find out whether the armies of the Sultan have really been the only armies guilty of committing atrocities in war. Even during the more recent Bulgarian troubles American missionaries, who were eye-witnesses, assure us that the atrocities committed by Turkish Bashibazuks were not greater than those committed by Christian armies when the day of victory and revenge had come. But, whatever the historical truth may be, no student of the history of religion, no reader of the Korán, would venture to say that the atrocities of Mohammedan warfare were sanctioned by the Korán. On that point, on teaching clemency towards the vanquished, the Korán is not

[1] *Hist. Review*, July, 1893, p. 430.
[2] *New Review*, 1893, p. 49.

behind the Old Testament or the Laws of Manu. If it had not been for the political part which the followers of Mohammed acted in the history of the world, their religion as taught in the Korán would have been, or at all events ought to have been, welcomed as a friend and ally both by Christians and by Jews. It was not at first a new or hostile religion; it was, as Mohammed declared himself, the old religion of Abraham, preached to the ignorant and idolatrous tribes of Arabia. Long before the time of Mohammed, Arabia was full of Jews and Christians. Gibbon speaks of Jews settled in Arabia 700 years before Mohammed, and he mentions new arrivals after the wars of Titus. As to Christianity, we know from Philostorgius[1] that in the year 342 an Italian bishop (Theophilus) was sent by the Emperor Constantius to the King of Yemen, and was allowed to build three Christian churches, one at Zafar, another at Adan, and a third at Hormuz on the Persian Gulf. The same writer speaks of the city of Najran in Yemen as the seat of a Christian bishop, and affirms that some important tribes had been converted there to Christianity. There was a magnificent church at Sana, to which the Arabs were ordered to go by the Christian ruler of Abyssinia when performing their pilgrimage, instead of visiting the Ka'ba. This led to the famous War of the Elephant in the very year of Mohammed's birth, so called because the Viceroy of Egypt, at the head of an army of Abyssinians, was fighting mounted on an elephant. Mohammed's immediate instructors in Christianity were Jabr and Yasâr, and they are

[1] *Hist. Eccles.*, i. p. 4.

said to have read to him both the Old and the New Testament. Nor is this all. The prophet's favourite wife Khadîjah and her cousin Waraka, the Prophet's intimate friend, were both suspected of having embraced Christianity. They were, at all events, acquainted with Christian doctrines. Among the Prophet's numerous wives we find a Jewess and a Coptic Christian. Among his advisers we meet with the name of a Christian monk called Sergius, in Arabic Boheira (Buhairah). No historian, therefore, can doubt that Mohammed was acquainted with Judaism and Christianity, and must have been influenced by them—nay, that he was favourably disposed towards them, more particularly in his strong antagonism to idolatry and polytheism. For a time it might indeed have seemed as if Mohammed was but the founder of a new Jewish or Christian sect. Not only did he distinctly represent the religion which he preached as the old religion of Abraham, but he spoke of the Old and New Testaments as the Word of God, and he spoke of Jesus in even higher terms than of Abraham. All he wished to do at first was to explain much of what was hidden of the Book[1] and to remove the false opinions entertained of Christ. Unfortunately the form in which Christianity reached him was most corrupt, and offended him by the perverted doctrine of the Trinity even more than it had offended the Jews. He accepted the Gospel as the revelation of God, and Jesus as the true prophet of God, but he wished to see Christianity purified and freed from later corruptions. Christian theologians of the narrowest school

[1] *Korán*, v. 18.

have admitted this, and even the Rev. Marcus Dods, now in the full odour of orthodoxy, declares that, if Mohammed had but known the true character of Christ, 'Christianity would have had one more reformer.' There is, of course, no evidence for saying that Mohammed ever was a Christian, but he might have been, except for the corruptions which had crept into Christianity through the most ignorant of Christian sects. Mohammed's feelings at first were evidently more friendly towards the Christians than towards the Jews. He declares that both Jews and Christians will be saved if they do what is right. 'Verily,' he says[1], 'those who believe and those who are Jews, and the Sabaeans and the Christians, whosoever believes in God and the last day, and does what is right, there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve.' But, he adds[2], 'Thou wilt surely find that the strongest in the enmity against those who believe are the Jews and the idolaters, and thou wilt find the nearest in love to those who believe to be those who say, "We are Christians"; that is because there are amongst them priests and monks, and because they are not proud.' It was the false doctrine of the Trinity, as taught at the time by certain Christian sects with whom Mohammed had to deal, that most strongly repelled him from Christianity. 'They misbelieve,' he says[3], 'who say, Verily, God is the Messiah, the son of Mary, but the Messiah said, O children of Israel, worship God, my Lord and your Lord.' A prophet who had abolished Al-Lât, Al-'Uzza, Manât, and the other goddesses of Arabia, was naturally horrified at seeing Mary, the mother of the

[1] *Korân*, v. 73. [2] v. 85. [3] v. 78.

Messiah, worshipped in the same way as a goddess, for instance by the Collyridian Christians. After the repeated condemnations pronounced by Mohammed against what he wrongly believed to be Christianity, because it happened to be the Christianity of his neighbours, missionaries have found it extremely difficult to convince his followers that Mohammed was mistaken. and that Christ Himself never taught that His mother was a goddess, that God was the Messiah or the Messiah an *alter Deus*. It is too late now to regret the misunderstanding between Mohammed and his Christian contemporaries. Many things can be prevented, but few things can be undone, and the loss which Christianity has suffered in alienating the powerful support of Mohammed in the East seems now almost impossible to repair. I felt this in every conversation which I had with enlightened Turks, and their number is by no means small. After long discussions we had generally to admit in the end that, in all the essential points of a religion, the differences between the Korán and the New Testament are very small indeed, and that but for old misunderstandings the two religions, Islam and Christianity, might have been one. In our friendly discussions my Turkish friends differed from each other on many points, for the number of sects is larger in Islam than even in Christianity; but in the end they could not resist my appeal that we should be guided in our discussions by the Korán, and by the Korán alone.

They all agreed that there were six articles of faith which all Musulmans accepted as fundamental, and as resting on the authority of the Korán: the unity of God, the existence of angels, the inspired character

of certain books, the inspired character of certain prophets, the day of judgement, and the decrees of God. Some added a seventh article, a belief in the resurrection, but this is really included in the belief in a day of judgement.

On the first and most important article—i.e. the unity of Godhead—Christians, Mohammedans, and Jews are all of one mind. If certain Christian sects exposed themselves to the suspicion of recognizing three Gods, I had no difficulty in proving to my Turkish friends that this was a later corruption, a mere invention of theologians and philosophers, and diametrically opposed to the true spirit of Christianity, though similar ideas might possibly not be quite extinct even at the present day among some theological schools. Nowhere has the misunderstanding of a metaphor wrought more serious mischief than in the dogmatic conclusions that were based on the simple expression of 'Son of God.' It is perfectly true that as soon as people are made to realize what Son of God would mean if it were not a metaphor, or if it were taken in a mythological not in a philosophical sense, they shrink with horror from realizing the thought; still they think they may play fast and loose with the metaphorical wording, and they repeat words which they would not dare to translate into clear thought. I had to admit that on this point, on the relation between Divinity and Humanity, the language of the Korán is far more elevated and less liable to misapprehension. The Korán says 'God will create what He will; when He decreeth a thing, He only saith Be, and it is.' It would never tolerate even a metaphorical nativity. It may be said that

'Word of God,' a name which Mohammed, like St. John, assigns to Christ, and to Christ alone, is likewise a metaphor. So it is, but it is the most perfect metaphor, the most sublime conception of the relation between man and God, recognizing God in man, and man in God ; nor is it exposed to the almost inevitable misunderstandings arising from sonship. That Mohammed calls Christ the Word of God, and that he places the first man Adam above the angels, shows that he had some idea of the Logos, as conceived by Christian philosophers. Thus, when speaking of Adam the Korán calls him the viceregent or caliph of God. God Himself taught Adam the names, which means the knowledge, of all things, while the angels remained ignorant till Adam himself told them the names. Hence the angels lay prostrate before Adam. This shows how high and how true a conception Mohammed had of man and of his divine birthright which places him above all angels. With all this, Mohammed distinguished carefully between Adam and Christ, for while it is said that God breathed His spirit into Adam, Adam himself is never, like Christ, called the spirit of God (Ruhu 'llah).

On the first and fundamental article of Islam, the unity of God, I and my friends agreed that there could be no real difference of opinion between an orthodox Musulman and an orthodox Christian, and I succeeded in convincing them by historical evidence that the false opinion which the Prophet had formed of the Trinity as a disguised Tritheism was entirely due to the corrupt opinions held by Christian sects settled in Arabia in the seventh century.

Nor did we find much difficulty in arriving at an understanding about the second article, a belief in angels. It is true that this is not an essential article of faith in Christianity, still both in Christian and Jewish traditions angels (Malak) have their recognized place, and in a certain sense even a higher place than in Islam. For while in the Bible Adam is represented as a little lower than the angels, in the Korán the angels have to bow before Adam.

On the third article, however, there was naturally at first much greater difference of opinion. That there are books which may be called inspired both religions hold alike, but they differ as to the books which deserve that name. The most important point, however, is the admission of the possibility of inspiration, or of an immediate communication between the Deity and man. The Mohammedans distinguish between two kinds of inspiration. The first called *wahy zâhir*, or external inspiration, the second *wahy bâtin*, or internal inspiration. We should call the former literal, when every word and every letter were believed to have proceeded from the mouth of Gabriel; the latter general, when the Prophet was led by thought and reasoning to the perception of truth and enunciated it in his own words. Now it is quite possible that Christians would not allow that the Arabic words of the Korán came from the Deity, whether directly or indirectly, and my friends pointed out that many portions in the Bible also—the historical chapters, for instance—could not possibly have been spoken by Jehovah, still less by God the Father. That Christ, however, was divinely inspired no Muslim

would deny, nor need any Christian deny the gift of *wahy bâtin* to Mohammed whenever his doctrines are the same as those of Christ—that is, whenever they are true.

Much the same question had to be discussed again when we came to consider the third article of the Mohammedan faith, a belief in inspired prophets. Mohammed believed in a whole class of chosen people who at all times and in all countries were meant to act as mediators between God and man. This is a most important belief, and wherever it prevails mankind is at once raised to a higher level, and brought into closer communion with the unseen world. The same belief lies at the root of Buddhism; for the Buddha *S*âkyamuni is represented as but one of a class of Buddhas or enlightened beings who in different ages are to deliver mankind from sin and misery. St. Paul expressed the same thought when he said, 'God, who at sundry times in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son.' Mohammed would have understood these words better than many Christian interpreters, for to him the Son is in the true sense the *Kalimatu 'llah*, 'the Word of God.' Mohammed took the most comprehensive views of the historical growth of the religions of the world, as far as he knew them, and it is much to his credit that he did not represent the religion which he preached himself as a new religion, but simply as the old religion believed in by Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, but purified by him from misunderstandings and corruptions, particularly such as had crept into it among the Christian sects in Arabia. In this respect he did no more than

what the Reformers did at a later time in Europe: he freed Christianity from human corruptions and misinterpretations. He protested against Christ being made another God, and against the Virgin being worshipped as a goddess. In Arabia the doctrine of the Trinity had been so completely misunderstood that the official formula was no longer the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, but the Father, Mary, and their Son.

In protesting against such heresy every Christian, particularly every Protestant Christian, would go hand in hand with Mohammed, nor need it be feared that Mohammed would ever usurp the place due to Christ alone. Mohammed claims to be the last, but not the greatest, of the prophets. He himself expresses greater reverence for Christ than for any other prophet. He called Him the Word of God, which is the highest predicate that human language can bestow, and which to Mohammed meant far more than the name of Son of God.

There remained, therefore, two articles only for our discussion: the fourth and fifth, the Day of Judgement and the Decrees of God. On the broad doctrines that there will be a day of judgement and a resurrection, I and my adversaries, or rather my friends, were able to agree without difficulty. The divergences began as usual when we came to minutiae; but here I think I was able to convince my friends that that religion is best which says least, or says what Christ said: 'Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only'; and again, 'What no eye hath seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God

hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by the Spirit.'

Lastly, as to the Decrees of God, or what we should call Predestination and Free Will, we find among Mohammedans the same disputes as among Christians. The fundamental principle 'that by no means can aught befall us but what God hath destined[1],' is acknowledged by both religions, and likewise, 'Whoever doeth that which is right will have their reward with the Lord.' Any attempt to go beyond these two principles leads to barren controversy only. We are told that when Mohammed found his companions debating about fate, he was angry and his face became red to such a degree that you would say the seeds of a pomegranate had been bruised on it. And he said, 'Hath God ordered you to debate of fate? Was I sent to you for this? Your forefathers were destroyed for debating about fate and destiny. I adjure you not to argue these points.' This reminds us of the stern manner in which Buddha rebuked his companions, whenever they asked him questions which he considered as beyond the grasp of the human understanding, and it would have been well if the same rebuke could sometimes have been administered to Calvin and his disciples.

If, then, these are the six fundamental articles of the Mohammedan faith, we agreed that they would offer no excuse for a split between Islam and Christianity. Every Christian could subscribe to every one of them. The mischief begins when an attempt is made to define things which cannot be defined or to speak of them even in metaphors,

[1] Surah ix. 51.

which after a time are sure to be taken in a literal sense.

It has often been said that a religion must be false which teaches what the Korán teaches about a future life. I do not think so. In every religion we must make allowances for anthropomorphic imagery, nor would it be possible to describe the happiness of Paradise except in analogy with human happiness. Why, then, exclude the greatest human happiness, companionship with friends, of either sex, if sex there be in the next world? Why assume the pharisaical mien of contempt for what has been our greatest blessing in this life, while yet we speak in very human imagery of the city of Holy Jerusalem, twelve thousand furlongs in length, in breadth and height, and the walls thereof one hundred and forty-four cubits, and the building of the wall of jasper and the city of pure gold, and the foundations of the wall garnished with all manner of precious stones, jasper, sapphire, chalcedony, emerald, sardonyx, sardius, chrysolite, chrysoprasus, jacinth, and amethyst? If such childish delights as that of women in certain so-called precious stones are admitted in the life to come, why should the higher joys of life be excluded from the joys of heaven? If Mohammed placed the loveliness of women above the loveliness of gold and amethyst, why should he be blamed for it? People seem to imagine that Mohammed knew no other joys of heaven, and represented Paradise as a kind of heavenly harem. Nothing can be more mistaken. In many places when he speaks of Paradise the presence of women is not even mentioned, and where they are mentioned they are generally men-

tioned as wives or friends. Thus we read[1]: 'Verily, the fellows of Paradise upon that day shall be employed in enjoyment, they and their wives, in shade upon thrones, reclining; therein they shall have fruits, and they shall have what they may call for, Peace, a speech from the merciful God.' Or[2]: 'For these shall enter Paradise, and shall not be wronged at all, gardens of Eden, which the Merciful has promised to His servants in the unseen; verily, this promise ever comes to pass.' Is it so very wrong, then, that saints are believed to enter Paradise with their wives, as when we read[3]: 'O my servants, enter ye into Paradise, ye and your wives, happy?'

In this and similar ways the pure happiness of the next life is described in the Korán, and if, in a few passages, not only wives but beautiful maidens also are mentioned among the joys of heaven, why should this rouse indignation? True, it shows a less spiritual conception of the life to come than a philosopher would sanction, but, however childish, there is nothing indelicate or impure in the description of the Houris.

The charge of sensuality is a very serious charge in the Western world, and it is difficult for us to make allowances for the different views on the subject among Oriental people. From our point of view, Mohammed himself would certainly be called a sensualist. He sanctioned polygamy, and he even allowed himself a larger number of wives and slaves than to his followers. Mohammedans, however, as I was informed, take a different view. They admire

[1] Surah xxxvi. 55. [2] xix. 60. [3] xliii. 62.

him for having remained for twenty-five years faithful to one wife, a wife a good deal older than himself. They consider his marrying other wives as an act of benevolence, in granting them his protection while others were 'averse from marrying orphan women[1].' Mohammedans look upon polygamy as a remedy of many social evils, and they are not far wrong. We must not forget that Mohammed had to give laws to barbarous and degenerate tribes, with whom a woman was no more than a chattel, carried off, like a camel or a horse, by whoever was strong enough to defy his rivals. In Arabia, as elsewhere, women were more numerous than men, and the only protection for a woman, particularly an orphan woman, was a husband. Much worse than polygamy was female slavery; still even that was better than what existed before. We must not forget that even now the slave who has become a mother has a recognized position in the family, and that her child is legitimate. They have in Turkey no young mothers who commit suicide or drown their illegitimate offspring. Though neither polygamy nor slavery can be approved, I confess that I found it hard to answer Mohammedan critics who had seen the streets and prisons of Paris and London. There are many enlightened Mohammedans who condemn polygamy and slavery. Polygamy, in fact, is dying out. Mohammed did not enjoin it, he simply tolerated it, as it was tolerated among the Jews, and carried even to excess by some of their kings such as David and Solomon—men, we are told, after Jehovah's own heart.

In all my discussions, however, with my Turkish

[1] Surah iv. 125.

friends there was one point which they could not gainsay, the high ideal of human life as realized in Christ and by no other prophet. This is, and always will be, the real strength of Christianity. Christianity was not only taught, it was lived, by Christ. As judged by his own contemporaries, Mohammed was no doubt a highly estimable character. He had gained the name of *el Amîn*, the Faithful, among his people, long before he became a prophet. No breach of the law as then existing can be laid to his charge during a long life in which he made open war against the most cherished errors and prejudices of his compatriots. He devoted his life to the cause of truth and right, and to the welfare of his fellow creatures. That he recognized the spirit of God in the spirit of truth within him stamps him at once as a true prophet; that he mistook that still small voice for the voice of the Archangel Gabriel only shows that he spoke a language which we no longer understand. The results which he achieved were very marvellous, if we consider that he was originally a poor camel-driver at Mekkah in Arabia, and that his religion extended rapidly from the rising to the setting of the sun. One thing is greatly to his credit. His followers soon ascribed to him the power of working miracles; he himself declared most strongly against all miracles, though in his case also they were clamorously demanded by an adulterous generation. And, as if foreseeing the difficulties which always arise when the thoughts and commands of one man or of one generation are stereotyped for all time, he left behind him these memorable words: 'I am no more than a man: when I order you anything with respect to religion, receive it; and when

I order you anything about the affairs of the world, then I am nothing more than a man.' What stronger fermán can social reformers demand for the abolition of polygamy, slavery, and for other changes required by the changed circumstances of the time, than these solemn words of their own wise Prophet?

# THE RELIGIONS OF CHINA[1].

## 1. Confucianism.

CHINA has had for a long time not one but three State religions—that is, three religions tolerated, supported, and protected by the State. The most widely spread and thoroughly national, however, is that which was restored and preserved, though not founded, by Confucius. Though it goes by his name as Confucianism, he himself, it should be remembered, never claims the books on which it rests as his own. These books are the Five Kings:—

(1) The *Yih King*, the Book of Changes.

(2) The *Shû King*, the Book of Historical Documents.

(3) The *She King*, the Book of Poetry.

(4) The *Le Ke*, the Record of Rites.

(5) The *Ch'eun Ts'ew*, Spring and Autumn, a chronicle of events from 721 B.C. to 480.

Secondly the four books, the Shû, or the books of the Four Philosophers:—

(1) The *Lun Yu*, the Digested Conversations, chiefly the sayings of Confucius.

(2) The *Ta Hëŏ*, or Great Learning, commonly attributed to Tsăng Sin, a disciple of Confucius.

[1] *Nineteenth Century*, September, October, and November, 1900.

(3) The *Chung Yung*, or the Doctrine of the Mean, ascribed to K'ung Keih, the grandson of Confucius.

(4) *The Works of Mencius*[1].

Confucius calls himself a transmitter only, not a maker, believing in and loving the ancients. When speaking of himself, he says: 'At fifteen I had my mind bent on learning. At thirty I stood firm. At forty I had no doubts. At fifty I knew the decrees of heaven. At sixty my ear was an obedient organ for the reception of truth. At seventy I could follow what my heart desired, without transgressing what was right.' Confucius died in 478 B.C., complaining that among all the Princes of the Empire there was not one who had adopted his principles, not one who would obey his lessons. This shows—what is, in fact, confirmed from other sources—that he himself was not an active reformer, so that while alive he scarcely produced a ripple on the smooth and silent surface of the religious thought of his own country. He was, no doubt, in advance of his contemporaries, but he took his stand chiefly on certain verities that had come down to him from ancient times, and his faith in these verities and in their coming revival has certainly not been belied by what happened after his death. His grandson already speaks of him as the ideal of a sage, as a sage is the ideal of all humanity. But even this grandson was far from claiming divine honours for his grandsire, though he certainly seems to exalt his wisdom and virtue beyond the limits of human nature. Thus he writes:—

'He may be compared to heaven and earth in their supporting and containing, their overshadowing and curtaining all things; he

[1] See Legge, *Confucius*, pp. 1, 2.

may be compared to the four seasons in their alternating progress, and to the sun and moon in their successive shining. . . . Quick in apprehension, clear in discernment, of far-reaching intellect and all-embracing knowledge, he was fitted to exercise rule. Magnanimous, generous, benign, and mild, he was fitted to exercise forbearance. Impulsive, energetic, firm and enduring, he was fitted to maintain a firm hold. Self-adjusted, grave, never swerving from the mean, and correct, he was fitted to command reverence. Accomplished, distinctive, concentrative, and searching, he was fitted to exercise discrimination[1]. . . . All-embracing and vast, he was like heaven; deep and active as a fountain, he was like the abyss. . . . Therefore his fame overspreads the Middle Kingdom and extends to all barbarous tribes. Wherever ships and carriages reach, wherever the strength of man penetrates, wherever the heavens overshadow and the earth sustains, wherever the sun and moon shine, wherever frost and dews fall, all who have blood and breath unfeignedly honour and love him. Hence it is said, He is the equal of Heaven.'

Considering that all this is said of a man who died as a simple official in a provincial town, the fact that in the second generation after him he was called the equal of Heaven is certainly surprising, particularly if we remember that Heaven is here used in the sense of the Divine. Confucius himself would have most strongly protested against any of the doctrines of his religion, as taught in the Five Kings and the Four Shûs, being ascribed to him or to any superhuman source. There is no other founder of any religious or philosophical system so anxious to hide his own personality, and to confess the general truth that what we receive is much, and what we add ourselves is little—infinitesimally little if compared with what we receive. And what is the result? Hundreds of millions are now professedly followers of Confucius, while we are told that Hegel on his death-bed

[1] Several of these adjectives can be translated approximately only, as there is nothing exactly corresponding to them in English.

declared that he had left one disciple only, and that this disciple had misunderstood him. If some of our modern philosophers lay so much stress on what they imagine is entirely their own invention—such as, for instance, *evolution* or *development* or *growth* or *Werden* —is not that chiefly owing to their ignorance of the history of philosophy? Religion is in that respect very much like language. People may preserve, they may even improve, purify, and add to their language, but in the end they are, like Confucius, not inventors, but only transmitters of language and religion.

How closely the fundamental ideas of the Chinese religion are connected with language has been shown for the first time by Professor Legge. He has laid bare a whole stratum of language and religion in China of which we had formerly no idea, and it is owing to our ignorance of that stratum that the Chinese religion has so often been represented as unconnected with Nature-worship such as we find in all Aryan religions; as without any mythology—nay, as without any God. But it cannot be doubted that several of these mythological and religious ideas appear even at an earlier time in China than in India or in Egypt and Babylon. And they appear there not only in the words, but, as Professor Legge has shown, even in the written symbols of the words which are generally ascribed to nearly 4,000 or 6,000 years before our time.

This surely requires the attention of all students of antiquity. It has generally been supposed that it was chiefly among the Aryan nations that Nature led on to Nature's gods; and it is hardly doubted now that not only the heavenly luminaries, but dawn

and night, rain and thunder, rivers and trees and mountains, were worshipped in the Veda, though while this kind of worship led to Polytheism, there were always faint rays of Monotheism which may possibly be due to a more ancient worship of the sky and the sun, and which afterwards developed into the conception of *one* God, or of one God above all gods. I say possibly, though what we know of the religious ideas of other nations, and even of savage and uncivilized races, seems to admit of this explanation only. That similar traces of a worship of Nature would be found in China was never even suspected. At all events the religion of the Chinese seemed to have left the mythological stage long before the time of Confucius. It seemed to be a prosaic and thoroughly unpoetical religion—full of sensible and wise saws, but a system of morality and of worldly wisdom rather than of religious dogmas and personal devotion. If it was full of eternal verities, it was also full of truisms. Again, if we mean by religion a revelation of the Deity, of its existence, its acts and its qualities, miraculously imparted to inspired seers and prophets, Confucius and those who followed him knew of none of these things, and hence they were even accused of having had no religion at all, or of having been Atheists in disguise. Against such a charge however, as Professor Legge has clearly shown, the Chinese language, nay, even the Chinese system of writing, protests most strongly. I ought to mention, perhaps, that Professor Legge was well acquainted with what I had written about *Dyaus, Zeus,* and *Jupiter.* He knew that in Sanskrit *dyaus,* as a feminine, means sky, the bright one, from a root DIV or DJU, to

shine; while *Dyaus*, as a masculine, is the bright sky, conceived as an agent, and that he was at one time the first and oldest god of the Aryan pantheon. *Dyaus* was in fact the same word as *Zeus*, and as *Jovis* and *Ju* in *Jupiter*, while the original meaning of *Jovis* breaks through in such comparisons as *sub Jove frigido*, under the cold sky[1].

In Chinese, as Professor Legge[2] showed, *tien*, 天, is the sign for sky and day, but it is also the name for God. It is true that Chinese scholars derive this sign from 一 (*yî*, one) and 大 (*ta*, great), so that it would have signified from the beginning 'the One and greatest.' This, however, would psychologically, if not chronologically, be a late name for Deity. It is true that the Chinese written symbols go back to nearly 5,000 years before our time, or to between the third and fourth millennium B.C. If Hwang-tî was the inventor of the written characters, his first year was 2697 B.C.; if Fû-hsî invented them, the first year of his reign was 3697 B.C.[3] This is a very ancient date, but the question before us is whether we may not even go behind these Chinese inventors of alphabets, and look upon the explanation of their symbol for *Tien*, as meaning by its component parts the One and the Greatest Being, as *ben trovato* rather than *vero*. When Confucius, however, uses such terms as *Tien*, heaven, *Tî*, Lord, and *Shang-Tî*, Supreme Lord, synonymously, it is quite clear that with him *Tien* meant no longer the visible sky only, but the in-

[1] See *Nineteenth Century*, 1885, 'The Lesson of Jupiter'; see also *Chips*, iv. pp. 368–411.

[2] Legge, *Religions of China*, p. 9.

[3] Ibid., p. 59.

visible agent behind the sky. The interval between *Tien*, the sky, and *Tien*, God, may be as large as that between *Dyaus*, the sky, and *Dyaus*, the God, but the original conception of the Divine, in China as well as in India, was clearly taken from something visible in nature, and in this case from the visible sky.

This *Tien* or *Tî*, we are told, was never prostituted to express the many gods or idols, but in spite of all the changes that followed in the history of their religion, kept the Chinese to their monotheistic belief[1] in heaven, and then only in a God in heaven, the One and the Greatest. But when *Tien*, or *Tî*, or *Shang-Tî*, is said to be the ruler of men and of all this lower world, when men are said to be His peculiar care, when He is said to have appointed grain to be the nourishment of all, and to have exalted kings to their high position for their good, Heaven is no longer the visible heaven only, as little as it is so in the New Testament, when the prodigal son says, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee.' That same *Tien*, Heaven, watches, as we are told, over the kings; he smells the savour of their offerings, and blesses them and their people with abundance, while he punishes them if they are negligent of their duties. Any psychologist who knows the secret workings of the mind, and has observed how changes of thought and changes of language run parallel, can easily understand how even the mere application of such a word as *dear* to the sky—Dear Sky, ὦ φίλε Ζεῦ, changes the sky into more than a mere animal or living thing, such as is postulated by Animism; while expressions such as the 'sky rains,' or 'he rains,'

[1] Legge, *Religions of China*, pp. 11, 16.

instead of 'it rains,' completes the personification of any inanimate agent, whether sky, or hill, or river, or tree. Very learned terms are used for what is in reality perfectly simple, and nothing seems so destructive of clear thought on these subjects as high-sounding names, such as Fetishism, Animism, &c. 'Feitiço' (*factitius*) or 'fétiche,' or 'fetish' is a name given by ignorant Portuguese sailors to the amulets of the negroes on the West Coast of Africa; and *fétichisme*, as a system, was invented by that most ignorant and pedantic of ethnologists, De Brosses, whose wild ideas of Fetishism as a primitive form of religion have survived even the ridicule of Voltaire, and have not been made less ridiculous by the patronage bestowed upon it by Comte and his followers. As to Animism, anybody who watches uncivilized races or common people even in Europe knows perfectly well that when, for instance, the moon is called in German 'Dear Moon,' or *Herr Mond*[1], he becomes at once an agent, an active, but not yet a masculine or feminine person. Anyhow, these merely grammatical changes, which have been fully discussed by Grimm in his German Grammar, are sufficient to explain to any student of psychology and language the natural transition of inanimate to animate objects. They require no mysterious help from what is called Animism, particularly if Animism is supposed to refer to that *anima*, breath, which presupposes lungs and throat.

It is important to have a clear conception of all this before we approach the so-called spirits of Nature and the spirits of the departed, who are said to have

[1] Grimm, *Deutsche Grammatik*, iii. p. 346.

been worshipped by the Chinese from very early times. Anyhow, their names and their written signs existed, and they by themselves would carry us back at least to about 2697 B.C. But what idea can we connect with such beings as *Shan*, the spirits of the sky, *Ch'i*, the spirits of the earth, and *Kwei*, the spirits of the departed or the Chinese *manes*? We are told that to judge from the ideograph for *Ch'i* or *Shi*, the spirits of the earth, it was meant originally for manifestation and what is above. In the sign for *Shan* also there is the element indicating what is above. The sign for *Kwei*, the *manes*, is explained by native Chinese scholars in the most fanciful way. But it is quite clear that every one of these names and signs for so-called spirits does not stand for something independent of clouds, rain, thunder, and winds, or for something animated or breathing, still less for a mere amulet or an idol, as little as *Agni* in the Veda means something independent of fire. If the Chinese speak of the spirit of rain, thunder, &c., they do not mean something apart from the rain, but rain and thunder conceived as active. We may do what we like, thunder as a spirit is no more than thunder as an agent, or as active; and to imagine that the term Animism, to say nothing of Fetishism, helps us in the least to understand the origin of these concepts is simply to blind ourselves by a mist of words. If we must have a technical term instead of Animism, it should be Agentism, which, barbarous as it sounds, is not more so than many other technical terms, and is certainly better, if only properly understood. The language of the Chinese seems almost to have been constructed in order to prevent the misrepresentation

that the religion of China took its form from the principles of Animism[1] and Fetishism.

The step from thunder and rain as agents to the spirits of thunder and rain is easily perceived as almost inevitable, in China as well as in ancient India. Only in China the subordination of these spirits to *Tien* or *Tî*, the Supreme Lord, was more clearly felt than in India. There is a danger indeed, as Professor Legge fully admitted, of the spiritual potencies being regarded as independent, and being elevated to the place of gods, as they were in the Veda; but in China the most ancient and strong conviction of the existence of *one* God, originally the one Heaven, prevented the rising of the manifestations of nature into the so-called spirits and their claiming equality with *Tien* as the One God. This is the real difference in China between the *One* God and the many gods or spirits or agents of nature which in other countries have given rise to various systems of Polytheism.

It is curious to observe that even the name of heaven and earth is used, not as the name of two Deities, like Dyâvâ-Prithivyau, heaven and earth, in the Veda, but as the name of one, namely of *Tien*, the one Supreme God. Thus we read Heaven and Earth is the parent (like father or mother) of all creatures. In order to avoid all danger of having two supreme Deities instead of one, Confucius says distinctly: the ceremonies of the sacrifices to Heaven and Earth are those by which we serve *Shang-Tî*[2], the Supreme God.

Little as such a naturalistic origin of Chinese

[1] Legge, *The Religions of China*, p. 19. [2] Ibid. p. 30.

religion was suspected, we can hardly doubt that Professor Legge was right in rejecting Animism and Fetishism, whatever they may be said to mean, as at the bottom of the home-grown religion of China, and tracing its origin straight to the same source from which we know the ancient religious beliefs of the Aryan races to have sprung. This is a most important discovery, and it is extraordinary how little its importance has hitherto been appreciated, though nothing has been said against any of his arguments. Professor Legge did not only know Chinese, but, like Stanislas Julien, he almost was a Chinese in his thoughts and feelings. One feels that one can trust him as a true scholar. It is true, no doubt, that the religion, such as we find it in the *Kings* and the *Shûs*, has little to do with a worship of nature or of Aryan Devas who might be called spirits or agents of nature, but we may in future take it as a fact that the religious ideas which lay far away behind Confucius were decidedly naturalistic, though the Chinese always retained their primitive belief in the one Supreme Lord, *Tien*, Heaven, or *Ti*, Lord, as a preservative against every trace of polytheistic infection.

Confucianism was certainly the last religion for which we should have expected a naturalistic background. It is so simple and dry, full of truisms and quaint observations, but free from all poetry, free from everything supernatural and miraculous, whether concerning the origin of man, or the intercourse between God and man, or the life of man after death. On all these things Confucius considers it next to madness to speculate or to assert anything

positively. In fact, it has been doubted whether this ancient and widely spread system deserves to be called a religion at all, and as we understand that name, no doubt, religion is not quite the name for the doctrines of Confucius. His chief object is to inculcate good behaviour, propriety, unselfishness, virtue, but as to revelation or anything revealed, as to miracle, and even as to a priesthood, he is persistently silent.

There are, however, many things in his teaching which a Christian could honestly accept. The golden rule of Christianity: 'All things whatsoever you would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them,' occurs again and again in the *Kings*. What is now called altruism Confucius called reciprocity, as when Tsze-Kung is introduced, asking if there is not one word which may serve as a rule of practice for all one's life, he is answered by Confucius, 'Is not *reciprocity* such a word? What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others.' And again, in the Analects, V. ii: 'What I do not wish men to do to me, I also wish not to do to men.' It seems rather a nice distinction when Dr. Legge says that Confucius only forbids men to do what they feel to be wrong and hurtful, while the Gospel commands men to do what they feel to be right and good. I confess this savours a little of the missionary rather than the historian of religions. If we must find a difference, it seems to me rather to lie in that Confucius cites no authority, sacred or profane, in support of his rule, while Christ appeals to the Law and the Prophets. This is a peculiarity, perhaps a defect, that runs through the whole of Confucius's

teaching. If he were asked by whose authority he taught, he would find it difficult to answer, except by appealing, as he always does, to antiquity.

One may discover some of the old belief in nature, in the teaching of Confucius to act like nature, to obey the Will of Heaven, and to submit to nature's laws, also to look upon man as part of nature. But this would hardly suffice as a basis for morality, whether in a family or in the State. He declines all metaphysics, but as he perceived an unostentatious working of perfect wisdom in all parts of nature, he believed that there was a Power ruling the world, and this was what he meant by the *Will of Heaven*. But he went no further. Everything infinite and superhuman, too, was looked upon by him as incomprehensible to a finite and human mind. He did not deny a God, or a future life, but toiling among such metaphysical uncertainties seemed to him worse than useless. What seemed to him certain was man and his perfectibility on earth. For this he strove by every word he said and by every deed he did. Death had nothing terrible for him, as little as birth. It was but a part of the working of Nature, and, as such, regular and beneficent like all her works. He could not admit anything miraculous, for everything supernatural or against the laws of nature seemed to him a slur on the wisdom of the Will of Heaven, though it might rest on the testimony of ever so many persons, ancient or modern. The ways of heaven and earth, he said, are without any doubleness, and produce things in a manner that is altogether unfathomable.

When Confucius enters upon ethics and politics he

explains how every individual should first of all improve himself and then try to improve the family and the State. The foundation of a State is, according to him, *Filial Piety*, and this forms the constant subject of his discourses, and of the discourses of other sages preserved by him. Some people have imagined that the origin of filial piety, as a sacred duty, is to be found in the worship paid to ancestors, which in China ranked next to the worship of God. But the question is, which came first, the filial piety shown to living parents or the worship paid to ancestors? Confucius himself declares: 'The services of love and reverence to parents when alive, and those of grief and sorrow for them when dead, these discharge completely the fundamental duty of living men.' The filial piety, or *Hsiâo*, is represented by a very ancient written sign, consisting of the symbols of an old man supported by his son. Confucius explains what is meant by filial piety.

'In his general conduct,' he says, 'he manifests to them the utmost reverence; in his nourishing them, his endeavour is to give them the utmost pleasure; when they are ill he feels the greatest anxiety; in mourning for them when dead he exhibits every demonstration of grief; in sacrificing to them he displays the utmost solemnity. When a son is complete in these five things he may be pronounced able to serve his parents.'

He then goes on and describes the result of such filial piety: 'He who thus serves his parents will, in a high situation, be free from pride.'

There is one book that treats entirely of *Hsiâo*, or filial piety, and which on account of its age and its authority has received the name *Hsiâo-King*. If we possess the same book of which Confucius speaks, it would be one of the oldest classics in China. Confucius

said, as we are told: 'My aim is seen in the *Chhun Ts'ew* (Spring and Autumn, a chronicle of events from B. C. 721 to 480), my rule of conduct is in the *Hsiâo-King*.' It was destroyed no doubt in the persecution of the Emperor Chhi-Hoang-Ti, when that emperor in 213 B. C. issued his edict[1] that all the old classical books should be consigned to the flames, except those belonging to the great scholars in the service of the State, and the *Yih-King*, which was for the purpose of divination and conjuring. Fortunately that emperor died four years after the issuing of his edict, and though his orders seem to have been most effectively carried out, yet much was saved by copies being hidden and by individuals whose memory seems to have been as wonderful as the memory of the Brâhmans in India. In China a new dynasty, that of the Han, began in the year 202 B. C., and in 191 B. C. the edict for the destruction of all books was formally repealed. It is true that later on a formidable opponent of the new dynasty of Han carried on the work of destruction during three months, and that many palaces and public buildings were at that time destroyed by fire. But even from that persecution the literary treasures of China are said to have escaped unscathed, and with regard to the *Hsiâo-King*, the book on Filial Piety, the Catalogue of the Imperial Library prepared immediately before the commencement of our era attests the existence of two copies containing the old text which had belonged to the family of Confucius. There are, however, two texts of the *Hsiâo-King* in existence—the longer or older, and the modern or shorter text—and there has been

[1] See Legge, *Life of Confucius*, p. 8.

much controversy among native scholars as to the age and genuineness of these two texts. That classic represents itself as containing the conversations between Confucius and one of his disciples, and it makes little difference to us whether these conversations were written down by that disciple himself or by his disciples again. The doctrines contained in the book are the doctrines of Confucius, as they may be gathered from the five Kings and from the Shûs, and they certainly give us the most primitive and simple ideas of the political philosophy of China that can well be imagined.

We are told in the beginning of the book that Confucius was once sitting unoccupied, and that one of his most distinguished disciples was sitting by in attendance on him. Then the master said, 'Shan, the ancient kings had perfect virtue and an all-embracing rule of conduct, through which they were in accord with heaven. By the practice of it people were brought to live in peace and harmony, and there was no ill-will between superiors and inferiors. Do you know what it was? The whole world has been looking for that secret, without as yet having found it.'

No wonder, therefore, that the disciple, Shan, rose from his mat and said, 'How should I, who am so devoid of intelligence, be able to know this?'

Then the master said, 'It was Filial Piety. Filial piety is the root of all virtue and the stem out of which grows all moral teaching. Sit down again and I will explain the subject to you. Our bodies, to every hair and bit of skin, are received by us from our parents, and we must not presume to injure or

wound them; this is the beginning of filial piety. When we have established our character by the practice of filial piety, so as to make our name famous in future ages and thereby glorify our parents, we have reached the end of filial piety. It commences with the service of parents; it proceeds to the service of the ruler; and it is completed in the establishment of character.'

We see already from these introductory remarks what Confucius is aiming at. Looking at the family as the unit of political life, he holds that organizations of all political bodies can be built up with these units, and that if children have once learnt to discharge their duties to their parents, they will have learnt how to treat their superiors in larger political associations, and to show proper respect to their rulers in Church and State. Peace and harmony will be preserved, and those who honour their father and mother will, in the language of the Old Testament, live long; that is, live long in peace in the land which God has given them.

Confucius then proceeds to show how filial piety should pervade all classes, from the common people to the very Son of Heaven; that is, the Emperor.

The common people must follow the course of heaven (in the revolving seasons); that is to say, they must observe the order of the heavenly signs for the purpose of agriculture, or, as he expresses it, they must distinguish the advantages afforded by different soils, be careful in their conduct and economical in their expenditure, in order to nourish their parents. This is the filial piety of the common people.

Inferior officers show their filial piety in serving

their fathers and loving their mothers, and in serving their rulers and reverencing them. Love is what is chiefly rendered to mothers, reverence to the rulers, and both love and reverence to fathers. When they serve their ruler with filial piety they are loyal, and when they serve their superiors with reverence they are obedient, and when they never fail in this loyalty and obedience in serving those above them they are able to preserve their emoluments and to maintain their sacrifices. This is the filial piety of the inferior officers.

Chief ministers and great officers, if controlled by filial piety, must never presume to wear robes other than those appointed by the laws of ancient kings, nor to speak words other than those sanctioned by their speech, nor to exhibit conduct other than that exemplified by virtuous ways (morality). When these things are all as they should be they can preserve their ancestral temples. This is the filial piety of the ministers and great officers.

But the Princes of States also, nay the Emperor himself, or the Son of Heaven, as he has been called ever since the Shang dynasty, have the duties of filial piety to fulfil. If he loves his parents he will not dare to incur the risk of being hated by any man or being contemned by any man. When the Son of Heaven has carried to the utmost the service of his parents, the lessons of his virtue will affect all the people and he will become a pattern to all within the four seas.

Well may the disciple exclaim after this: 'Immense indeed is the greatness of filial piety'; while Confucius adds: Yes, filial piety is the constant course of Heaven,

the righteousness of earth and the practical duty of man. Heaven and earth invariably pursue that course, and the people take it as their pattern. The ancient kings imitated the brilliant luminaries of Heaven, and acted in accordance with the varying advantages afforded by the earth, so that they were in accord with everything under Heaven, and in consequence their teachings without being severe were successful, and their government without being rigorous secured perfect order.

This was probably what Confucius meant by acting in harmony with Heaven or the will of Heaven, and by the people being led by the rules of propriety and by music. The order of nature was the prototype to be imitated by rulers and subjects, every one proceeding in order like the heavenly luminaries, every one holding his own place and not interfering with those before or behind him, but showing respect and love to all. 'In such a state of things,' as Confucius says, parents, while alive, reposed on the glory of their sons, and when sacrificed to after death, their disembodied spirits enjoyed their offerings; disasters and calamities did not occur; misfortunes and rebellions did not arise.

All this may be called very primitive, whether from a political or from an ethical point of view. Yet the frequent appeals to the happiness enjoyed by the people under sovereigns imbued with the principles of filial piety, as laid down in the *Hsiâo-King* by Confucius, show that in ancient times they proved successful in maintaining peace and order, and this is more than can be said of many more recent systems of policy and ethics. It is impossible here to give larger

extracts from the *Hsiâo-King*, but those who care for these early attempts at political science will come across many things worthy of consideration in the third volume of my *Sacred Books of the East*, where they will find a complete translation of the *Hsiâo-King*, and likewise of the *Shû-King* and *Shî-King*, while later volumes contain the *Yîh-King* (vol. xvi), the *Le Ke*, or the Rules of Propriety (vols. xxvii and xxviii), and the *Texts of Taoism* (vols. xxxix and xl), all translated by my friend, the late Professor Legge. Anyhow, when one reads these books, however justly they may be suspected of representing ideals rather than realities, one begins to doubt whether the believers in evolution are right in supposing that all evolution and all development proceeded from the less perfect to the more perfect, from the ape to the savage, from the savage to the sage, or whether there was not in China also from time to time a *reculer*, let us hope, however, *pour mieux sauter*[1].

## 2. Taoism.

The next home-grown religion in China is Taoism, ascribed to Lâo-tzé. Of him and of his life, if we exclude mere legends, even less is known than of Confucius. Some have indeed gone so far as to deny his existence altogether, and though his reported

[1] Confucius is the latinized form which Roman missionaries gave to the Chinese name Kong-fu-tzé, i. e. the venerable teacher Kong. It is a pity that they did not adopt a similar latinized name for Lâo-tzé, calling him Laocius. But they did not take much notice of that philosopher, who therefore became known to the world under his Chinese name only.

interview with Confucius has been generally considered as establishing once for all the historical character of both these sages, even that meeting, fixed as having taken place about 517 B.C., might well be the product of tradition only. Something like it has happened, indeed, to most founders of religion. Tradition adds so many fanciful and miraculous traits to the real story of their lives that, like a tree smothered and killed by ivy, the subject of all these fables, the stem round which the ivy clusters, becomes almost invisible, and seems at last to be fabulous itself. Still the trunk must have been there, and must have been real in order to serve as the support of that luxuriant ivy. It is said, for instance, of Lâo-tzé that his mother bore him for seventy-two years, and that, when he was born at last, in 604 B.C., he had already white hair. Is it not palpable how this tradition arose? Lâo-tzé was the name given to him, and that name signifies Old Child, or Old Boy. This name being once given, everything else followed. He was born with white hair, and spoke words of wisdom like an old man. Even the very widely spread idea that the fathers of these wonderful heroes were old men recurs in this instance, for the father of Confucius also was said to have been well stricken in years. But, after all, the parents and what was fabled or believed about them in China are nothing to us. What we want to know is what the Old Boy thought and taught, and this is what we find in the *Tâo-teh-King*. Nor does it help us much if we read of the modern state of Taoism, in which the sublime ideas of Lâo-tzé seem entirely swamped by superstitions, jugglery, foolish ceremonies, and idolatry.

On the contrary, we shall have to forget all that Taoism has become in later times, and what it is at the present day, if we want to understand the ideas of the old philosopher. We are told that at present those who profess Taoism belong to the lowest and most degraded classes of society in China, nor do we ever hear of the spreading of Taoism beyond its national frontiers or of any attempts to spread it abroad by means of missionary efforts. In fact, we can hardly doubt that Taoism, in this respect at least, resembled Confucianism. Both were home-grown national forms of religious and mythological faith, both sprang up from a confused and ill-defined mass of local customs and popular legends, sacrificial traditions, medical and hygienic observances—with this difference, however, that the teaching of Confucius acted from the very first prohibitively against the mass of existing superstitious beliefs and practices of the common people, and laid the strongest stress on ethical and political principles, excluded polytheism and all talk about transcendent matters, while Taoism excluded little or nothing, but was ready to accept whatever the people had believed in for centuries, only adding what must always have been a philosophy first, and a religion afterwards—the belief in Tâo. In 140 B.C. a learned scholar of the name of Tung Chung-shî recommended to the Emperor Wû that all studies not found in the six departments of knowledge and in other arts sanctioned by Confucius should be strictly forbidden, so that the people should know what to follow, and that the depraved and perverse talk which was heard at that time should cease once for all. But the Emperor, though aware of the

evil, threw himself for many years into the arms of the charlatans, mostly Taoists, much as he afterwards repented of his folly. What made Taoism so popular was that the Taoists preferred to practise ever so many of the black arts. They professed to change baser metals into gold, to brew the elixir of immortality, to produce manifestations of the spirits, and to perform similar tricks which have found credence at all times and in all countries among the ignorant masses, sometimes even at Courts and among people who ought to have known better.

When Confucius warned his people to keep aloof from spirits, this warning, which looks at first very like a warning against all spiritual beliefs, may possibly refer to the motley worship of the so-called spirits only, with which Taoism was deeply infested. It may be said that Confucianism was later than Taoism, and could therefore avoid the dangers on which Taoism was wrecked. But the background of the two religions was evidently the same. Only while Confucius tried to discard whatever seemed to him hurtful, Taoism seems never to have been strong enough for so unpopular a task. We ought not to make Lâo-tzé, the author of Taoism, responsible for the national substratum of his religion, nor for the rubbish that entered into its construction. Though he was raised in later times to be one of the chief gods and spirits of the Taoists, Lâo-tzé himself was far too sensible to aspire to such an honour.

The corruption of Taoism, owing to the vitiated elements which it had admitted into its system, seems to have been very rapid. If we look first at the

degraded state of those who profess Taoism in China, and examine the popular beliefs and the public worship in which they rejoice, we can hardly trust our eyes when we come to read the *Tâo-teh-King*, the only book which Lâo-tzé has left behind, and on which his real teaching, whether we call it philosophy or religion, was founded. In early times, and even in China itself, Lâo-tzé is spoken of as the superior of Confucius in his sublime flights of speculation and fancy. Certainly Confucius must have been a man of great humility. He is said to have exclaimed, 'Alas! there is no one that knows me!' adding, however, 'But there is Heaven—He knows me.' A man who can say that must be a man of independent thought and of a strongly marked religious character. But, though he dare not admit it himself, he was known, and was known even during his life-time, as one of the so-called 'superior men,' far superior even to Yâo and Shun, the phœnix among birds, the T'âi mountain among mounds and ant-hills. Still, as he was the younger, being thirty-five when Lâo-tzé was eighty-eight years of age, Confucius, having heard of Lâo-tzé's fame, went to see him in 517 B.C. Lâo-tzé received Confucius with a certain air of superiority, but Confucius, after his interview with Lâo-tzé was over, was evidently full of admiration for the old philosopher. He is reported to have said to his own disciples: 'I know how birds can fly, fishes swim, and animals run; but the runner may be snared, the swimmer hooked, and the flyer shot by the arrow. But there is the dragon; I cannot tell how he mounts on the wind through the clouds and rises to heaven. To-day I have seen Lâo-tzé, and can only compare him to the

dragon[1].' The followers of Confucius and Lâo-tzé, however, did not remain united in friendship and admiration, like their respective teachers. In the first century, as Sze-mâ Chien relates, the believers in Tâo had become a separate school, opposed to the adherents of Confucius and opposed by them. Many more legends gathered round Lâo-tzé. He was deified, he was believed to have existed in a former life, and, what has often been repeated, as pointing to Christianity, he was believed to have predicted a coming teacher—a teacher that would come from the west. This is, no doubt, a curious prophecy; the difficulty is only to find out at what time it arose and by whom it was first mentioned. The earlier legend speaks only of Lâo-tzé as leaving his home in disgust and going to the north-west. Here the keeper of the gate is said to have asked him to compose a book. He agreed, wrote the book, the *Tâo-teh-King*, and then proceeded alone on his distant journey and disappeared, no one knowing whither he had gone and how he died.

But, though we are told that during all his life he had been teaching the doctrine of the Tâo, it seems almost impossible, in spite of all that has been written on the subject by Chinese and European *savants*, to say what Tâo really meant. We have now many translations of the *Tâo-teh-King*, but even they do not throw much real light on this mysterious being. It is clear, however, that Tâo was not a man, nor a visible or palpable thing. But if it was a concept, we ask again whence that concept arose, what it comprehended, and how it ever sprang up in the mind of

[1] Legge, *Religion of China*, p. 206.

man. We are accustomed to find concepts in every language to which there is no word corresponding in other languages. Concepts such as *revelation* and *inspiration* mean very different things in different languages, and there is no word so difficult to render into any language as Logos, the Word. Still, we can generally define the category of thoughts to which such names belong; but even that seems impossible with Tâo. Hence some philosophers—and it is clearly a subject for philosophers rather than for Chinese scholars—speak with open contempt of Lâo-tzé and his Tâo, while others, particularly those who first discovered the *Tâo-teh-King* and translated it, are rapturous in their admiration of that ancient philosophy. The first who published a translation of the *Tâo-teh-King* was Rémusat, a member of the French Institute, and certainly a man thoroughly inured to the hardest philosophical speculations. In 1825 Rémusat wrote in the first volume of his *Asiatic Miscellanies*, p. 8:—

'The current traditions regarding this philosopher (Lâo-Tseu), the knowledge of which is due to the missionaries, were not of a character to encourage the first inquirers. The study of his book altered all the ideas which I had been able to form about him. Instead of the originator of a set of jugglers, professors of the black art, and astrologers, who seek for immortality and the means of raising themselves through the sky to heaven, I found a genuine philosopher, a single-eyed moralist, an eloquent theologian, and a subtle metaphysician. His style has the sublimity of the Platonic, and also, we must say, something of its obscurity. He produces quite similar thoughts in nearly the same words. Moreover, his whole philosophy breathes mildness and goodwill. His condemnation is directed only against hard hearts and violent men. His opinions on the origin and constitution of the universe show neither ridiculous fables nor a scandalous want of sense; they bear the stamp of a noble and high spirit; and in the sublime views

which they disclose show a remarkable and incontestable agreement with the teaching which the schools of Pythagoras and Plato exhibited a little later [1].'

Professor Legge uses much more sober language when speaking of the *Tâo-teh-King*, yet he also calls it a κτῆμα ἐς ἀεί. In Rémusat's words we see an expression of the same surprise of which we spoke just now, and which everybody must feel who compares the so-called religion of the Taoists in China with the *Tâo-teh-King* of their founder. The two are different things, though they go by the same name. Professor Legge, who knew the Chinese mind and Chinese literature in all its branches, from long familiarity with China and the Chinese, seems far less surprised at this treasure found in ancient China. It may be true, as Legge and other Chinese scholars maintain, that Taoism, though known long before the introduction of Buddhism into China in the first century after our era, became an established religion with a fully developed system of ceremonial worship, chiefly through the influence of that foreign religion. It may have been a perfectly natural wish on the part of the followers of Lâo-tzé, who stood in a kind of opposition to the orthodox and conservative Confucianism, to assume a more settled form, and particularly to adopt something like the elaborate worship of the Buddhists, with their monasteries, their public processions, their vestments, their statues and idols. If Professor Legge is right, the existing religion of Taoism was begotten by Buddhism out of the old

[1] See also *Mémoire sur la Vie et les Opinions de Lâo-Tseu, Philosophe Chinois du VI^me^ Siècle avant notre Ere, qui a professé les Opinions attribuées communément à Pythagore, à Platon et à leurs Disciples.* Paris, 1823.

superstitions of the country, and it was not till after statues of Buddha had been brought to China that statues of Confucius and other great men of the past began to be made, nor was any image ever fashioned of the Confucian God of the old classics[1]. But now, if you go into a Taoist temple, you are immediately confronted by three vast images, looking exactly like Buddhas. They are, however, the great gods of the Taoists, the three Pure Holy Ones—the Perfect Holy, the Highest Holy, and the Great Holy One. They actually are called Shang-Tî, the Confucian name for God, the Supreme Lord. The second is meant for Lâo-tzé, here called the Most High Prince Lâo. The third is the Gemmeous sovereign God, who is supposed to exercise control over the physical world and to superintend all human affairs. Many legends are told about these three Pure or Holy Ones. The first, who is also called P'an-ku, is the first man who opened up heaven and earth. He is sometimes represented as a shaggy, dwarfish Hercules, developing from a bear rather than from an ape, and wielding an immense hammer and chisel, with which he is breaking the chaotic rocks and fashioning the earth. There are ever so many legends told about the third of these popular idols, who is represented as the ruler of the world. Yet the original of that idol, too, is said to have been a magician of the family of Lâo-tzé, and the story is told of him that he and another magician, called Liû, rode a race on waggons up to heaven, a novel position for the ruler of the world to find himself in. This is a fair specimen of the vulgar Taoism, with its grotesque fancies and its unbeautiful

[1] *Religions of China*, p. 167.

art. It is true that Buddhism also had a very fanciful mythology and collection of legends, but we can generally discover a meaning in them, while in Taoism everything is a kind of dumb show. The three Precious Ones of Buddhism, often represented by statues and images, are said to be emblematic of the intelligence personified by Buddha, the Law, and the Community or Church, or, as the people thought, the Buddha Past, Present, and To Come. We shall see that the Buddhism which found most favour in China was not only the purely ethical and at the same time historical Buddhism of India, as represented in Pâli, the Tripiṭaka, the so-called Hînayâna, the Little-go, but the Mahâyâna, the Great-go, a system of Buddhism the origin of which is still enveloped in great obscurity, and which may have borrowed from tribes beyond the Himalayan chain as much as it gave to them. Neither Buddha, who died 477 B.C., nor Confucius, who died 478 B.C., nor Lâo-tzé, the older contemporary of Confucius, cared about any of these purely external embellishments of religion. In one instance we can almost watch an exchange of opinion between Confucius and Lâo-tzé. All three agreed on the principle that we should treat others as we wish that they should treat ourselves. Lâo-tzé, however, went even a step beyond, and commanded his followers to return good for evil. One of the school of Confucius, we are told, heard this maxim, and, being puzzled by it, consulted the master. Confucius thought for a moment and then replied, 'What, then, will you return for good?' And his decision was, 'Recompense injury with justice, and return good for good!' Lâo-tzé's sentiment may seem more

sublime, but the answer of Confucius was certainly more logical.

But what is Tâo which Lâo-tzé proclaimed, and on which the whole of his philosophy was founded? If we once know this, we shall be able to judge for ourselves whether, as Samuel Johnson observes, this ancient book contains really 'water from unseen wells and life from original fountains,' or whether what we find there is muddy water only, of which the very spring, the Tâo, defies all accurate definition, nay, even translation. If we take the title *Tâo-teh-King* we find that *King* means 'book,' particularly a classical book; *Teh* means 'virtue' or 'outcome'; and if we consult Lâo-tzé himself, he says, 'If I were suddenly to become known, and (put into a position) to conduct (a government according to the Great Tâo), what I should be most afraid of would be a boastful display. The great Tâo (or way) is very level and easy; but people love the by-ways.' This shows, though not very clearly, that with him Tâo was the straight path, the right tendency; but in what sense he meant this straight path to be understood remains uncertain. The old Latin translator uses *Ratio.* Rémusat says, 'Ce mot me semble ne pas pouvoir être bien traduit si ce n'est par le mot λόγος dans le triple sens de souverain Etre, de Raison et de Parole.'

In many respects Logos would certainly seem a good substitute for Tâo, though not in all. If, however, Professor Legge thinks it could not be rendered by Logos, because it had a father and was believed to have pre-existed, he should have remembered that some early theologians claimed pre-existence for the Logos also, though conceived as the Son. He even

seems to admit that people would not be far wrong if they took Tâo in the sense of Nature, when by a metonymy of the effect for the cause the word is used for the Creator, Author, or Producer of things, or for the powers that produce them. Dr. Hardwick, again, took Tâo for an abstract cause, or the initial principle of life and order. Watters and Balfour agree that Tâo is best matched by the word 'Nature,' if used in the sense of *Natura naturans*, while all that exists (in Chinese, Tiên te waoo wû) denotes the *Natura naturata*. Still Professor Legge is not quite satisfied with any of these renderings, because the Tâo was not of a visible nature, but was the quiet, orderly course, the unseen but admirable method, in which nature developed into that Kosmos which we see.

Strauss boldly translates Tâo by God; but this, again, is impossible, because there is very little that is personal in the Tâo, and the old name for God was there already in Chinese—namely, Tien. When Lâo-tzé says, 'I do not know whose son Tâo is; it might seem to be before God,' he certainly seems to give a personal character to Tâo; but even in this connexion 'son' has been understood to mean no more than product, while what seems to be before God cannot well be the son of God. Again he says, 'Before there were heaven and earth, from of old, there It was, securely existing. From It came the mysterious existence of spirits; from It the mysterious existence of God (Tî).' What wonder that missionaries thought they discovered in the *Tâo-teh-King sanctissimae Trinitatis et Dei incarnati mysteria*? It is very strange that, different as these various renderings of Tâo are, yet we find while reading the various trans-

lations of the *Tâo-teh-King* that now one, now the other, seems to fit best into the context of words and the context of thoughts with which the author is dealing. Translators, however, seem to forget that mere words, such as Nature, God, Reason, Logos, and all the rest, require themselves a definition before they can be declared adequate for the purpose of translation. One thing seems quite clear—that in the philosophical and religious development of early humanity there is nothing that had the same origin and the same development as the Chinese Tâo. All agree that it meant originally the path or course, and that afterwards it came to mean something quite different, such as nature, God, or reason, though they do not explain by what stages this transition took place.

But though there is no word and no concept in any other language, the historical development of which runs parallel with that of Tâo, I venture to point out one occurring in Vedic, though almost forgotten in classical Sanskrit, which seems to me to fulfil those conditions better than any other word. I mentioned it years ago to Professor Legge, but, as he was unacquainted with the language and the growth of philosophy of the Veda and the Upanishads, he was afraid that my explanation would only be explaining the *ignotum per ignotius*—a mere addition of a new translation—without any addition of new light on the hidden origin of the Tâo. I see that I even mentioned my idea in a note to my *Lectures on the Origin of Religion*, that is to say, in 1878, p. 251. My conviction has, however, become stronger and stronger the more I studied Lâo-tzé's *Tâo-teh-King*, and the

more I watched the application of Tâo to natural, psychological, moral, and political developments, supposed to have originated in and to be ruled by the Tâo. For it must not be forgotten that Tâo rules, or is meant to rule, not only in nature, but in the government of States also, and in the actions of each individual. One thing only I must guard against at once—namely, the idea that I look upon Tâo as a Vedic idea, transferred in ancient times, like many other things, from India to China. Not even among the Buddhists of India does such an idea occur, though there may possibly have been earlier communications between India and China than we are aware of. The parallelism between the Vedic and the Chinese courses of thought need, therefore, prove no more than a natural coincidence, showing, it may be, that the conception of the Tâo was by no means so peculiar to the Chinese as it seemed to Chinese scholars[1].

*Ri*ta, from *ri*, to go, would mean originally the going, the moving forward, the path, particularly the straight or direct path. Thus we read in the Rig-veda, i. 105, 12, 'The rivers go the *Ri*ta'—i. e. the right way; or, RV. ii. 28, 4, 'The rivers go the right way of Varu*n*a.' Here '*Ri*ta' may mean no more than the right or proper way, and the same meaning would apply when Varu*n*a and other gods are called the guardians of *Ri*ta—that is, of the right way, or of the right. But when Varu*n*a and Mitra and other gods are said to be born of *Ri*ta, to know the *Ri*ta, or to increase the *Ri*ta, *Ri*ta has evidently the meaning of something prior to the gods, a something from

[1] See what Le Page Renouf says about the Egyptian Maât (*Hibbert Lectures*, p. 169 et seq.).

which even the gods may be said to proceed. The Way is used in the sense of that which caused the movement or gave the first impulse, and likewise the first direction to all movement—the κινοῦν ἀκίνητον, or *primum mobile*—in fact, the very Tâo, as we shall see. *Ri*ta may first have been suggested by the visible path of the sun and other heavenly luminaries, but it soon left that special meaning behind, and came then to signify movement and course in general—that is to say, in a larger sense—including the movements of sun and moon and stars, of day and night, of the seasons and of the year. On the other hand *Ri*ta came to mean the point from which a movement proceeded, the starting-point, or the cause of any movement, more particularly of the great cosmic movement. When the sun rises the path of *Ri*ta is said to be surrounded by rays, and it was used for the place from whence the movement originated, and sometimes also of the originator of such movement. The sun is actually called the bright face of *Ri*ta. The dawn is said to dwell in the abyss of *Ri*ta. The god Varu*n*a (Uranus) is introduced as saying, 'I supported the sky in the seat of *Ri*ta,' and later on *Ri*ta is conceived as the eternal foundation of all that exists.

When *Ri*ta, or the path of *Ri*ta, had once been conceived as the path on which the gods overpowered the darkness of the night, it was but a small step for their worshippers to pray that they also might be allowed to follow that right path. In this connexion it is often doubtful whether we should translate the path of *Ri*ta or the right path. And we can from this point of view better understand how *Ri*ta, after meaning what was straight, right, and good, came to

mean law. 'O Indra,' the god exclaims, RV. x. 133, 6, 'lead us on the path of *Rita*, or on the right path, over all evils.'

At all events, we can see now how many ideas may and do cluster round this one word *Rita*, with its original concept of path changed into movement, impulse, origin, disposition, tendency, bent, law, &c. Divergent as these concepts are, they can all be shown to converge towards one primitive concept, of something first perceived in the movements of the heavenly bodies, day and night, summer and winter, and in the end experience of the law and even the lawgiver that rules the world and rules ourselves. When there are no mythological gods, such as Agni or Indra, the God, whether *Tien* or Varu*n*a, became naturally the law or the lawgiver. The mental process is the same, however much the words may differ.

Anyhow we can clearly see from the Vedic word *Rita* that the ancestors of our race in India did not only believe in divine powers, manifested in nature, but that their senses likewise suggested to them the concept of order and law as revealed in the daily path of the sun, and of other heavenly bodies, in the succession of day and night and of the seasons.

Let us now see whether the Chinese *Tâo*, the origin of which, as a concept, has puzzled so many Chinese scholars, may not be rendered intelligible by being compared with the Vedic *Rita*. Each by itself is obscure, *Rita* as well as Tâo, but for all that they may throw light on each other; only we must remember that the one has grown up on the mental soil of India, the other on that of China.

That Tâo is not meant for a personal being, though

it sometimes comes very near to it, may be gathered from such passages as 'the Tâo is devoid of action, of thought, of judgement, of intelligence.' When Lâo-tzé speaks of the Tâo in nature, it means nothing but the order of nature. The Tâo of nature is no doubt the spontaneous life and action of nature; it is that which changes the chaos into a kosmos, and represents the law and order visible in nature, in the growth of animals and plants, in the course of the seasons, the movements of the stars, in the birth and death of all animals. In all of these there is Tâo, an innate force, sometimes also something very like Providence, only not like a personal God. If water by itself finds its level, runs lower by its own gravity as long as it can, and then remains stagnant, that again is due to its Tâo, its inherent qualities, we should say, or its character, its very being (svabhâva), as Hindu philosophers would call it.

So much for Tâo in nature. As to the Tâo in the individual, who is considered a part of nature, it becomes manifest in all actions which are spontaneous, and, as Lâo-tzé requires, show no cause and no purpose. If the individual acts as he acts because he cannot help it, he acts in conformity with his Tâo. He lets himself go and act as his nature moves him. If the heart is empty of all design and of all motives, then the Tâo has its free course. This leads to the glorification of perfect quietude, and of allowing perfect freedom to the Tâo. Lâo-tzé actually maintains 'that by laziness and doing nothing there is nothing that is not done.' 'All things,' he adds, 'shoot up in spring without a word spoken, and grow without a claim to their production. They accomplish their development

without any display of pride, and the results are reached without any assumption of ownership.'

So it is or should be with man, who, while the Tâo has free play, remains perfectly humble and never strives. The water too is a pattern of humility. It abases itself as low as it can and finds its lowest level. Thus we read (p. 104):—

'What makes a great State? Its being like a low-lying, down-flowing stream; it becomes the centre to which tend all the small States under heaven. To illustrate from the case of all females: the female always overcomes the male by her stillness, and the process may be considered a sort of abasement[1].'

On p. 52 Lâo-tzé says:—

'The highest excellence is that of water. That excellence appears in its benefiting all things, and in its occupying, without striving to the contrary, the low place which all men dislike. Hence its way is near to that of Tâo.'

'There are three precious things,' Lâo-tzé says, 'which I prize and hold. The first is gentle kindness, the second is economy, the third is humility, not daring to take precedence of others. With gentleness I can be brave, with economy I can be liberal, not presuming to take precedence of others. I can make myself a vessel or means of the most distinguished services.'

All this may be perfectly true; the only question is whether it can be obtained by simply letting the Course (Tâo) have free course, by being good-natured without being aware of it, aye, as he says in conclusion, by loving even our enemies. He goes a step further, and maintains that by following this course men may acquire 'mysterious power,' may become inviolable, enjoying freedom of all danger, even the

[1] *Tâo-teh-King*, translated by Legge.

risk of death. Poisonous insects will not sting him, wild beasts will not seize him, birds of prey will not strike him. This is, of course, sheer fatalism, and it might seem that Tâo could in this connexion be translated by *fatum*. And this is the point where a good deal of the superstitious practices of the Taoists comes in. They do not see the metaphorical significance of these words, but profess by a symbolism of the breath and other hypnotic practices to act as physicians and to be able to brew even the elixir of life. Death does not seem to exist for them as an extinction of life. Anyhow, dying means to them no more than the perishing of the body, while the soul is immortal. A Taoist of the eleventh century writes: 'The human body is like the covering of the caterpillar or the skin of the snake, as occupying it but for a passing sojourn. When the covering is dried up the caterpillar is still alive, and so is the snake when the skin has decomposed and disappears. But he who knows the permanence of things becomes a sharer of the Tâo, and while his body may disappear his life will not be extinguished.'

In this way the exoteric and the esoteric meaning of Lâo-tzé's doctrines show themselves, as professed either by the *vulgus profanum* or by the sage.

We can easily imagine what this doctrine of the Tâo may become when applied to the government of political society, though Lâo-tzé certainly went beyond our wildest imaginations. The ethics of political life are the chief interest of Confucius, and they are so, though in a different form, in the system of Lâo-tzé. Confucius goes back to very primitive times when he imagines that a State could be governed by Hsiâo, or

Filial Piety, but Lâo-tzé goes far beyond when he looks upon Tâo as the true principle of all government. Confucius also speaks of the way of Heaven, which we ought to follow. Both the ruler and the ruled are to act without purpose, without striving, in fact without any activity except what is suggested by the Tâo, perfect quietude and unselfishness. 'As soon as a sage exercises government he would seek to empty the hearts of his people from all desires, he would fill their bellies, weaken their ambition, and strengthen their bones. He would try to keep them without knowledge, oppose the advancement of all knowledge, and free them from all desires.' One can hardly trust one's eyes, but this is Professor Legge's translation of the *Tâo-teh-King*, and I believe he may be implicitly trusted. There are covert hits at the Filial Piety preached by Confucius. It was only when the great Tâo method fell into disuse, and there came in its room benevolence and righteousness, very inferior to the Tâo, and afterwards shrewdness and sagacity, and at last hypocrisy, that Filial Piety was considered a panacea for all defects of government. 'When harmony ceased to characterize the six nearest relations of kindred there arose Filial Sons; when States and clans became involved in disorder loyal ministers came into notice.' Lâo-tzé's remarks sound almost like a satire on Confucius, but he repeats his accusation, and says: 'When the Tâo was lost goodness appeared again as inferior to Tâo. When goodness was lost benevolence appeared. When benevolence was lost righteousness appeared. When righteousness was lost propriety appeared. Now, propriety is the attenuated form of leal-heartedness and sincerity, and

the commencement of disorder. Every member of a State should act as the Tâo or, it may be, his nature compels him, and this Tâo is supposed to be better than goodness, benevolence, righteousness and propriety.' Knowledge, too, does not fare better. Not to value men for their superior talent is the way to keep people from contentious rivalry; not to prize articles difficult to obtain is the way to keep them from stealing; not to show them the example of seeking after things that excite the desires is the way to keep their hearts from disorder.

Lâo-tzé seems to have believed that such a paradisiacal State once existed, and that there were rulers then under whom their subjects simply knew that they existed. They all said: 'We are as we are ourselves.' The great object of the governors was to keep people simple, and one only wonders how the ancients ever forfeited such a paradise. Knowledge seems to have been considered as the chief cause of all mischief. 'The difficulty of governing the people arises from their having too much knowledge; and therefore he who seeks to govern a State by wisdom is a scourge to it, while he who does not seek to govern it thereby is a blessing.' It is but natural that Lâo-tzé should, on account of such sentiments, have been looked upon as an enemy to all knowledge and a believer in the blessings of ignorance. But we ought not to forget that his description of what a political system ought to be, or even had been, was a Utopia only, and we should remember that in another Paradise also the fruit of the tree of knowledge was a forbidden fruit. I cannot bring myself to believe that a man of Lâo-tzé's genius would have

wished to revive that state of paradisiacal ignorance and innocence in modern States, though it is certainly true that superstitious ignorance flourished more among the Taoists than real knowledge. Yet he says in so many words: 'Though the people had boats and carriages they should have no occasion to use them. Though they had mail coats and sharp weapons they should not don them. I would make them return to the use of knotted cords (an important passage, as showing the former use of knotted cords, *quippos*, instead of written characters, in ancient China also). They should think their coarse food sweet, their plain clothing beautiful, their poor houses places of rest, and their common ways places of enjoyment.'

Much more is to be found in the *Tâo-teh-King* as to the power and the workings of Tâo, but what has been said may suffice for our purpose. We see in Taoism a system of philosophy and religion, sometimes the one, sometimes the other, which has sprung up on purely Chinese soil, though at a later time it was evidently far more influenced than Confucianism by the newly introduced system of Buddhism. Taoism and Confucianism both point back to an immeasurable antiquity, and they certainly made no secret of having taken anything that seemed useful from the treasures or from the rubbish of ancient folklore that had accumulated in times long before the days of Lâo-tzé and Confucius. Those who have known the present class of Tâo priests and who have witnessed their religious services form a very low opinion of a religion which has lasted for twenty-four centuries, and, though formerly professed by much larger numbers in China,

is even now, while the number of its adherents is considerably reduced, a powerful element for evil as well as for good in China. As an historical phenomenon it deserves the careful study of the historian, if only to teach us how even a religion supported by the State may do its work by the side of other religions without the constant shouts of anathema to which we are accustomed in other countries. No one seems a heretic in the eyes of the Chinese Government excepting always the hated foreigner; and while one Taoist may grovel in the meanest religious practices and another soar high into regions which even the best disciplined of Christian philosophers hesitates to venture into, the two will not curse each other as infidels, but try to carry out the highest Christian principle of loving our enemies, or at least of doing justice to them.

### 3. Buddhism and Christianity.

The third of the State-supported, but often State-persecuted religions of China is that of Fo, the Chinese name for Buddha. The circumstances under which the religion of Buddha was introduced from India to China are matter of history; and unless we mean to doubt everything in Eastern history for which we have not the evidence of actual eye-witnesses, the introduction into China of Buddhist teachers by the Emperor Mingti in the year 65 A.D. has a perfect right to claim its place as an historical event. It may be quite true that the fame of Buddhism had reached China at a much earlier time. A Buddhist missionary is mentioned in the Chinese

annals as early as 217 B.C., and about the year 120 B.C. a Chinese general, after defeating some barbarous tribes in the North of the Desert of Gobi, is reported to have brought back among his trophies a golden statue of Buddha. But it was not till the year 65 A.D. that the Emperor Mingti gave practical effect to his devotion to Buddha and his doctrines by recognizing his religion as one of the State religions of his large empire. It would seem most extraordinary that the ruler of a large empire in which there existed already two State religions should, without being dissatisfied with his own religion, have suddenly asked the teachers of a foreign religion to settle in his country, and there, under the protection of the Government, to teach their own religion, the doctrine of Buddha. The Chinese idea of religion was evidently very different from our own. Religion was to them giving good advice, improving the manners of the people; and they seem to have thought that for such a purpose they could never have enough teachers and preachers. Legend may no doubt have embellished the events that actually took place. No wonder that visions seen by the Emperor in a dream were introduced; but even such visions would not help us to explain, what certainly seems a most extraordinary though real event in the history of the world, the introduction of the Buddhist religion into China and the rest of Central Asia. Soon after Mingti we hear of Indian Buddhists who had gone to China and brought with them MSS. and sacred relics. But even that would be of little help; for what could be more different than Sanskrit and Chinese, the language of the missionary and that of his Chinese pupils? The

sacred canon of Buddhism—for at that time we know of one only, the one written in Pâli and reduced to writing by Vattagâminî in 80 B.C.—had not yet been translated into Chinese, and at the time of the introduction of Buddhism into China this canon would seem to have been the only one accessible to Chinese Buddhists; and yet it is clear that the Chinese depended far more on the Sanskrit than on the Pâli canon. The Emperor sent Tzaï-in and other high officials to India, in order to study there the language, the doctrines, and the ceremonial of Buddhism. They engaged the services of two learned Indians, Buddhists of course, Matânga and Tchou-fa-lan, and some of the most important Buddhist works were translated by them into Chinese. Missions were sent from China to India to report on the political and geographical state of the country, but their chief object remained always to learn the language, to enable Buddhist missionaries to translate and generally to study the work done by Buddhism in India. On the other hand, Indian Buddhists were invited to settle in China to learn the Chinese language—no easy task for an Indian accustomed to his own language—and then to publish, with the help of Chinese assistants, their often very rough translations of the Buddhist originals. In the catalogue of these translations, those taken from Sanskrit texts preponderate evidently over those taken from Pâli. Yet we know now, thanks chiefly to the labours of Bunyiu Nanjio, in his catalogue of the Chinese Tripiṭaka—which was secretly removed from my library, and which, considering the notes it contained from the hands of Bunyiu Nanjio and other Chinese scholars, was sim-

ply invaluable—and from the researches of Takakusu, that both texts, the Pâli and the Sanskrit, were placed under contribution by Chinese translators.

For about 300 years after the Emperor Mingti, the stream of Buddhist pilgrims seemed to flow on uninterruptedly. The first account which we possess of these pilgrimages refers to the travels of Fa-hian, who visited India towards the end of the fourth century A.D. The best translation of these travels is by M. Stanislas Julien. After Fa-hian, we have the travels of Hoei-seng and Song-yan, who were sent to India in 518 by command of the Empress, with a view to collecting MSS. and other relics. Then follow the travels of Hiouen-thsang (629–645 A.D.). Of these too we possess an excellent translation by Stanislas Julien. One of the last and certainly most interesting journeys is that of I-tsing, who travelled in India from 671 to 695 A.D. Takakusu, a Japanese pupil of mine, has rendered a real service to the study of Sanskrit, more particularly to the history of Sanskrit literature in the seventh century A.D., by translating I-tsing's Chinese memoirs into English.

These travels, lasting from the fourth to the seventh century, give us some idea of the literary and religious intercourse between China and India. Some of the Chinese travellers made themselves excellent scholars in Sanskrit, and were able to take an active part in the religious congresses and public disputations held every year in the towns of India. At the same time the number of Buddhist monasteries in China is said by Hiouen-thsang to have amounted in his time to 3,716. What is still a great puzzle is what became of the thousands of Buddhist MSS. which we know to

have been taken to China by Indian missionaries, for the reception and preservation of which large and magnificent public libraries were built by various emperors, and which seem now to have entirely disappeared from China. Many researches have been made for them by friends of mine in China and Corea, but all that could be found was one not very interesting MS., the Kâlachakra (Wheel of Time), which was sent to the India Office. Of course there were in China from time to time violent persecutions of Buddhists, and during those scenes of violence monasteries were razed to the ground and many public buildings burnt. Still, all hope should not be given up; and if China should ever become more accessible, new investigations should be made wherever Buddhist monasteries and settlements are known to have existed, it being quite possible that a whole library of Buddhist literature and ancient Buddhist MSS. may still be recovered. What we want more particularly is to learn, if possible, what caused the great bifurcation of Buddhism into Hînayâna and Mahâyâna, the Little Way and the Great Way, or whatever translation we may adopt for these two schools. Both systems are clearly Buddhistic, but they are in some respects so different from one another that sometimes we can hardly imagine that they had both the same origin or that one was derived from the other. Long passages in the books of the two schools are sometimes identically the same, but on certain points of doctrine the two are often diametrically opposed. To mention a few points only. The Buddhist of the Hînayâna, or the Pâli canon, denies most decidedly a personal soul and a personal God. The Mahâyâna

admits a personal God, such as Amitâbha (Endless Light), residing in the paradise of Sukhâvatî, and it evidently believes in the existence of personal souls. After death the souls enter into the calyx of a lotus, and remain there for a longer or shorter time, according to their merits, then rise into the flower itself and, reclining on its petals, listen to the Law as preached for them by Buddha Amitâbha. A translation of the description of this paradise, Sukhâvatî, was published by me for the first time in the *S. B. E.*, vol. xlix. It is quite possible, as has been supposed, that the absence of any information as to the fate of the soul after death may have made the stories about the paradise of Sukhâvatî particularly attractive both to the followers of Confucius and to the original Hînayâna Buddhists. Still, it is difficult to believe that this would have induced the Chinese to adopt what was a foreign religion, even in its Mahâyâna disguise. Nor could miracles such as Matânga, one of the two missionaries who arrived first at the Court of Mingti, is said to have performed, have had sufficient persuasive power to produce a change of religion on a large scale among the inhabitants of China. It is said that he sat in the air cross-legged and without any support. But of what Yogin has not the same been believed? It is quite possible that other miracles also of the Indian Yogins made some impression on the Chinese mind; but all this leaves the recognition of Buddhism as a State religion, and the growth of what may almost be called a new religious literature, entirely unexplained. The change of the early Buddhism, Hînayâna (the Small Way) into that of Mahâyâna (the Great Way) has never, as yet, been

satisfactorily accounted for. Some people think that the Mahâyâna was so called because it led to a higher goal, others that it was a way for a larger number, the Small Way being so called, evidently by the seceders, because it led to a lower goal or was followed by a smaller number. Even the priority of the Small Way to the Great Way is by no means admitted by the supporters of the latter system. Chronology, in fact, in our sense of the word, does not exist for the Mahâyâna Buddhists, and where there are no historical records, fables spring up all the more readily. Thus we are told that the founder of the Mahâyâna system of Buddhism was Nâgârguna; that he had travelled to the South and North of India, and there come across a race of men more or less fabulous, called Nâgas, i.e. Serpents; that they possessed copies of the canonical books of the Mahâyâna, and gave them to Nâgârguna. These Nâgas are frequently mentioned, and there may well have been a real race of men called Nâgas or Serpents; but how they should have come into possession of these books, written in Sanskrit, how they should have hidden them, as we are told, in a large lake, and produced them at the time of Nâgârguna's visit has never been explained. Nâgârguna is mentioned as present at the fourth Buddhist council, that at Galandhara, called by King Kanishka, at the end of the first century A.D. This date, however, has been very much contested. He is the fourth in the list of Buddhist patriarchs; but that list again is purely imaginary, and for chronological purposes useless. What seems certain is that he was a contemporary of King Kanishka, a King of India, of Mongolian rather than Aryan blood, whose coins give him an

historical background. He is called there Kanerkes, a Kushana king, and his life must have extended beyond the end of the first century of our era, say A.D. 85–106. But all this does not help us towards an explanation of the true origin of the Mahâyâna Buddhism. We see no causes for a change in Buddhism, no new objects that were to be obtained by this reformation, if indeed it deserves to be called by such a name. We cannot possibly ascribe the elaboration of the new system of Buddhism to one man, such as Nâgârguna, nor does he put forward any such claim. On the contrary, we are told that the Mahâyâna books existed long before his time, and were handed to him by the Nâgas. Besides, where did he find the disciples ready to follow him? There was no widespread discontent with the old Buddhism, as far as we can judge. But the fact remains that we find a new Buddhism with its canon written in Sanskrit, and it was this Buddhism that found such decided favour in China. It may in some respects be called a more popular form of Buddhism, but its highest speculations must have been at the same time quite beyond the grasp of the multitude. It has a kind of personal Deity; it has saints in large numbers, and a worship of saints; it has its future life and a paradise which is described in the most attractive colours. But whatever we may think of it, the Mahâyâna was at all events the Buddhism which found favour in the eyes not only of the Chinese, but of Tibet, Corea, Japan, and of the greater part of Central Asia. While the Hînayâna kept itself pure in Ceylon, Burmah, and Siam, the Mahâyâna Buddhism took possession, not only of China, but of

Turkestan also, of the Uigurs in Hami and on the Ili. It is quite true that Asoka at the time of the third council sent missionaries to Kashmir, Kabul, and Gandhâra, and it may have spread from there to the countries on the Oxus, to Bucharia, nay even to Persia. But the legend that a son of Asoka became the first king of Khotan seems to have no historical foundation. Khotan, no doubt, became the chief seat of Buddhism till it was expelled from there by Mohammedanism, but that is different from counting a son of Asoka as their first king. That Buddhism had spread in Asia before its recognition by the Emperor Mingti in China, is an impression that it is difficult to resist. We saw already that a Buddhist missionary is mentioned in the Chinese annals in 217 B.C., and that about the year 120 B.C. a Chinese general brought back a golden statue of Buddha[1]. Is that the golden Buddha who suggested to the Emperor the golden Buddha in his famous dream? Much still remains obscure in these early conquests of Buddhism in Central Asia, conquests never achieved by force, it would seem, but simply by teaching and example; but the fact remains that Buddha's doctrine took possession, not only of China, but of adjacent countries also.

Highly interesting as these conquests of Buddhism outside of China are, what interests us at present is not the reception which that religion met with outside of China, but the reception which it received when once introduced into the Middle Kingdom. We must not imagine that when the Emperor had dreamt his dream, and given his sanction to the introduction of

[1] Köppen, *Buddhism*, ii. p. 33.

Buddha's religion into China, it was at once embraced by thousands of people. Its progress was slow, and it does not seem as if Confucianism had even approved of it very hastily. Taoism, on the contrary, was evidently very much attracted by Buddhism. It was found that the two shared several things in common, both in superstitions and in customs and ceremonial. It has been supposed that the introduction of Buddhism gave a certain impulse to Taoism, particularly in its ecclesiastic constitution; that Buddhism exercised, in fact, the beneficial influence on Taoism which a rival often exercises, and that yet the two rivals remained better friends than might have been expected.

What may seem still more extraordinary are the neighbourly relations, nay, the real sympathy, which existed from the first arrival of Christian missionaries in China, between them and the Buddhists. It is true the Christian religion never became a State religion in China, but there were times when it enjoyed every kind of support from the Emperor and the Imperial Court. The missionaries themselves, so long as they did not concern themselves with political questions, were looked upon by the Government as useful teachers, not of morality only, but of several sciences—particularly of astronomy and chronometry, though this happened at a later time. European watches proved excellent weapons for Christian missionaries, and the regulation of the calendar was left very much to them. It happened even that, when at times they incurred the Imperial displeasure and had to leave Pekin, all the clocks in China stopped, and there was no one to mend them and to wind them up again. It is still more extraordinary that at that

early time already Chinese Emperors should have discovered a number of coincidences between Christianity and Buddhism, but so far from approving of a mixing up of the two, such as we often have seen in our own time, should have protested solemnly against all such attempts. Thus the Emperor Tê-tsung decided that the monastery of the Buddhists at Hsian-fu and the monastery of Tâ-tsin (Rome) are quite different in their customs, and their religious practices entirely opposed. Adam, a Christian monk, ought therefore to hand down the teaching of Mishiho (Messiah), and the Buddhist monks should propagate the Sûtras of Buddha. 'It is to be wished,' he adds, 'that the boundaries of the two doctrines should be kept distinct, and that their followers should not intermingle. The right must remain distinct from the wrong, as the rivers Ching and Wei flow in different beds.' What will the so-called Neo-Buddhists or Christian Buddhists say to this? And yet at the time of Adam or King-shing, at the time of the Emperor Tê-tsung, this intermingling of Buddhism and Christianity was a fact the study of which has been strangely neglected. Christian, chiefly Nestorian, missionaries were very active in China from the middle of the eighth century[1]. Their presence and activity there are mentioned not only in Chinese books, but they are attested by the famous monument of Hsian-fu, often called Sêgan-fu, or Sîngan-fu, the old capital of China. The monument had been erected in the year 781 by the Nestorians who were settled there, and who lived in a monastery of their own, called by the Emperor the monastery of Tâ-tsin, just

[1] See *Christianity in China*, by James Legge, 1888.

as another Emperor called Christianity the religion of Tâ-tsin. In that monastery we see that Buddhists and Christians lived together most amicably, and even worked together, and were evidently not frightened if they saw how on certain points their religious convictions agreed. The Buddhists then seemed by no means the *Yellow Terror* of which we have heard so much of late. It was near Hsian-fu that a Nestorian monument was seen among the ruins by early travellers, and last in 1866 by Dr. Williamson. It was just as it had been described by the people who unearthed it in 1625; the principal portion of the inscription is in Chinese, but there are also a number of lines in Syriac. When that inscription was first published it was the fashion to consider everything that came from missionaries abroad as forged: the very presence of Christian missionaries in China in the seventh century A. D. was doubted; but Gibbon, no mean critic, not to say sceptic, writes in the forty-seventh chapter of his history:—

'The Christianity of China between the seventh and thirteenth centuries is invincibly proved by the consent of Chinese, Arabian, Syriac, and Latin evidence. The inscription of Sighan-Fu, which describes the fortunes of the Nestorian Church, from the first mission in the year 636 A. D. to the current year 781, is accused of forgery by La Croze, Voltaire, and others who become the dupes of their own cunning whilst they are afraid of a Jesuitical fraud.'

The doctrinal portion of that inscription does not concern us much beyond the fact that it contains nothing which a Nestorian missionary at that time might not have said. It seems intentionally to avoid all controversial topics, and it keeps clear of any attacks on paganism, which would have been equally out of place and dangerous. From the historical portion and the signatures we learn that the first

Nestorian missionary, called Olopun, arrived in China in 635, that he was well received by the Emperor and allowed to practise and teach his own religion by the side of the three religions then already established in China, that of Confucius, that of Lâo-tzé, and that of Fo or Buddha. These three religions are alluded to in the Nestorian monument as 'Instruction' (Confucianism), 'the Way' (Taoism), and 'the Law' (Dharma, that is, Buddhism), while Christianity is simply spoken of as the 'Illustrious Doctrine.' These religions seem to have existed side by side in peace and harmony, at least for a time. Christianity spread rapidly, if we may judge by the number of monasteries built, as we are told, in a hundred cities. This prosperity had continued with but few interruptions till the year 781, when the monument was erected. It must be remembered that during these two centuries Christian doctrines were carried to Persia, Bactria, probably to India also, by persons connected with the Nestorian mission, and that about the same time Chinese Buddhists, such as Hiouen-thsang (A. D. 629–45) and I-tsing (671–95), explored India, while Indian Buddhists migrated to China to help in the work of translating the sacred canon of the Buddhists from Sanskrit into Chinese. We see, therefore, that during these centuries the roads for intellectual, chiefly religious, intercourse were open between India, Bactria, Persia, China, and the West, and that all religions were treated with toleration and without that jealousy and hatred which we find in later times. There must have been a certain *camaraderie* between Christian and Buddhist missionaries in the monastery of Hsian-fu—also called Si-gnan-fu, the present residence of

the Chinese Court, and possibly the future capital of China—for we read in the travels of I-tsing, p. 169, that a well-known Indian monk from Kabul named Pra*gñ*a translated a number of Sanskrit texts into Chinese, and among them the Sha*t*pâramitâ Sûtra, as may be seen in the catalogue of the Chinese Tripi*t*aka, published in 1883. Now it was in the monastery of Tâ-tsin, founded by Olopun, that this Buddhist monk finished his translation of the Sha*t*pâramitâ Sûtra, assisted by a priest from Persia. On the monument of Hsian-fu the Chorepiscopus signed his name in Syriac, and this is the very name of the fellow worker of Pra*gñ*a, or in Chinese King-ching. The case becomes still more curious, for it is said that Adam at that time did not know Sanskrit very well, and that Pra*gñ*a was not very familiar with Chinese, both therefore availed themselves of a Mongolian translation of the Sûtra which they had undertaken to render into Chinese; but as Pra*gñ*a was not a good Mongolian scholar either, the result seems to have been, as in the case of several of the Chinese translations of Buddhist texts, a complete failure. The Emperor Tê-tsung, when appealed to on the subject, declared that the translation was indeed very rough and obscure, and it was at that time that he expressed his disapproval of mixing up Christianity and Buddhism. What is important to us to know, whether the translation itself be correct or incorrect, is the co-operation of Christian and Buddhist missionaries in the monastery of Hsian-fu, and probably in other monasteries also.

But while Christians and Buddhists shared in their prosperity in China, they had also to share in their adversity. Whenever the persecutions of the Bud-

dhists in China began—and they were terrible and frequent—the Christians shared their fate, with this difference however, that while the Buddhists recovered after a time, the Christians, having to be supplied from their distant homes were altogether annihilated in China. While under the enlightened Emperor Tai-tsung (627–49) the number of Buddhist monasteries in China seems to have been about 3,716[1], the edict of the Emperor Won-tung reduced their number considerably, and after the edict of Khang-hi few Buddhists and hardly any Christian monasteries remained in China.

It is curious, however, to see with what pertinacity the Church of Rome and its various orders clung to the idea that the East, and more particularly India and China, should be won for the Roman Church. After the Reformation particularly, the Roman See, as well as the Dominicans, Franciscans, and above all the Jesuits, seem never to have lost sight of the idea that the ground which their Church had lost in Europe should be reconquered in China. Already under Benedict XII (1342–6) attempts were made to send out again Christian missionaries to China, but they soon shared the fate of the Nestorian Christians, and in the sixteenth century, when Roman Catholic missions were organized on a larger scale, no traces of earlier Christian settlements seem to have been forthcoming. François Xavier, who after his successes in India and Japan was burning with a desire to evangelize China, died in 1552, almost in sight of China[2]. Then followed Augustine monks under

[1] *Hiouen-thsang*, p. 309.

[2] See Canon Jenkins's *Jesuits in China*, 1894.

Herrada, and Franciscans under Alfara. Both had to leave China again after a very short sojourn there. Then came the far more important missions of the Jesuits under Ricci, who landed in 1581. They were better prepared for their work than their predecessors. Anyhow, they had studied the language and the customs of the country before they arrived, and in order to meet with a friendly reception in China they arrived in the dress of Buddhist monks. They became in fact all things to all men; they were received with open arms by the Emperor and the learned among the mandarins. It was Ricci who made such propaganda by means of his clocks; but he did not neglect his missionary labours, though it is sometimes difficult to say whether he himself was converted to Confucianism, or the Chinese to Christianity. He wrote in Chinese a book called *Domini Cælorum vera ratio*. He adopted even the Chinese name for God, *Tien* or *Shang-Ti*, and joined publicly in the worship of Confucius. That was the policy of the Jesuits in China, as it was their policy in India, when about the same time Roberto de Nobili (1577–1656)[1] taught as a Christian Brahmin, adopting all their customs and speaking even Sanskrit, being no doubt the first European to venture on such a task. The history of these missions is full of interest, but it would require considerable space to touch upon even the most salient points and the most marked personalities. Many Chinese, particularly in the higher classes, became Christians, and they thought they could do so without ceasing to be Confucianists, Taoists, or Buddhists. The Jesuits survived even the

[1] See *Science of Language*, i. p. 209.

Great Revolution in 1644, which brought in the present Manchu dynasty, and one of them, the Father Schaal, was actually appointed governor of the Crown Prince, the son of Chun-ki. The widow of the Emperor and her son allowed themselves to be baptized in 1630. In Europe people were full of enthusiasm for China, and many imagined that Christianity had really conquered that vast empire. But a reaction began slowly. Some missionaries, not Jesuits, became frightened, and laid their complaints before the Pope at Rome. Even at Rome the so-called Accommodation Question became the topic of the day, and at last, after various legates and Vicars Apostolic had been sent to Pekin to report, and numerous witnesses had been listened to as to murders, poisonings, and imprisonments of the various missionaries then settled in China and striving each and all for supremacy, the Papal See could not hesitate any longer, and had at last to condemn the work of the Jesuits both in China and in India. It is difficult for us to judge at this distance of time. Certainly, Christian ideas had gained an entrance into China, particularly among the highest classes, and it was hoped that in time the mere *chinoiseries* of their faith would be stripped off, and true Christianity, relieved of its Chinese trappings, would step forward in its native purity. How far the Jesuits thought that they could safely go we may learn from a list of doctrines and customs which the Curia condemned as pagan rather than Christian. Such things must have existed to account for their official condemnation. The Pope declared he would not allow the Chinese names for God, Tien and Shang-Ti, but would recognize but one reading, Tien

Chu, i. e. the Lord of Heaven. He prohibits the tablets then placed in many of the Christian churches inscribed 'Kien Tien' (Worship Heaven). The worship of Confucius and of ancestors, that had been sanctioned for a time on the strength of false information, was condemned as pagan. Missionaries were distinctly forbidden to be found at festivals and sacrifices connected with his worship, and no tablets were allowed to be erected in Christian churches that contained more than the name of the departed. Such propositions as that Chinese philosophy, properly understood, has nothing in it contrary to Christian law, that the worship assigned by Confucius to spirits has a purely civil and not a religious character, that the *Teh-King* of the Chinese was a source of sound doctrine, both moral and physical, were all condemned as heretical, and the missionaries were warned against allowing any Chinese books to be read in their schools, because they all contained superstitious and atheistic matter.

This of course put an end to the Christian propaganda in China, and crushed all the hopes of the Jesuits. The Roman Curia seem to have regretted their having to take such severe measures against their old friends. The missionaries struggled on for a time; but when the Emperors of China, their former friends and protectors, began to take offence at the Pope's issuing edicts in their own empire, most of the Christian missionaries were dismissed, because they felt they had to obey the Pope more than the Emperor. They were in consequence deprived of all their appointments, some of them very lucrative and influential, and expelled from China, and new arrivals

were likewise subjected to very severe measures. The persecutions of the Christians at various times, and as late as 1747, 1805, 1815, 1832, seem to have been terrible. The Emperors complained of *lèse-majesté* on the part of the Pope, who, as a foreign sovereign, ought not to have issued edicts in the Chinese Empire. The Emperors, in fact, knew very little what the Pope really was, and the Popes looked upon the Emperors as Chinamen, as pagan and half-savages. The Pope, however, insisted on his right of jurisdiction all over the world in all spiritual and ecclesiastical questions, and the result was that the Christian Church, so carefully planted and built up by the Jesuits, crumbled away and became extinct in China. The whole of that history, bristling with heroes, martyrs, and saints, can be read in any of the histories of Christian missions. We see clearly that what the Chinese hated was not the teaching of Christ, but the foreigners themselves who had come to preach His doctrine, and who were making proselytes in China. If the missionary was submissive he was generally free to teach his doctrine, but the anti-foreign sentiment came out at the same time with unexpected strength, a sentiment so deeply engrained in the Chinese mind that nothing but clocks and other useful mechanical and scientific inventions found permanent favour with the Chinese. There is no passage in their *Kings* prescribing hospitality and kindness to the stranger within the gate. There is nothing even about the sacrosanct character of envoys, though embassies from and to China were of frequent occurrence. In the *Lî Kî*, iii. 17, we read: 'At the frontier gates, those in charge of the prohibitions examined

travellers, forbidding such as wore strange clothes, and taking note of such as spoke a strange language.' So it has been and so it will be again and again in China, unless the Foreign Powers are able to impress the people with fear and respect. It was under the protection of the European Powers that the missions of the reformed churches began their work in China at the beginning of this century; but, trusting in that protection, they seem on various occasions to have provoked the national sensibilities of the Chinese, and thus, particularly in the case of their native converts, to have encouraged the Chinese to commit such atrocities as those we have just been witnessing. Although they could not possibly, like the Jesuits, adapt themselves to the prejudices of the Chinese, they seem to have given greater offence than in their ignorance they imagined. To give one instance only. The European missions would send out not only married but unmarried ladies, and persisted in doing so, though warned by those who knew China that the Chinese recognize in public life two classes of women only—married women, and single women of bad character. What good results could the missions expect from the missionary labours of persons so despised by the Chinese? It will be long before Christianity finds a new and better soil in China than it found at the time of Ricci. To claim any privileges, however small, for Chinese converts was certainly an imprudence on the part of the Great European Powers, who after all were powerless to protect their faithful martyrs. In Chinese society any attempt to raise the social status of these Christian converts was sure to excite jealousy and even hatred. After our late

experience it must be quite clear that it is more than doubtful *whether Christian missionaries should be sent or even allowed to go to countries, the Governments of which object to their presence.* It is always and everywhere the same story. First commercial adventurers, then consuls, then missionaries, then soldiers, then war.

In the course of centuries it could hardly be otherwise than that sects should arise in the three State religions of China, Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. Persecutions were frequent, but at the bottom of each we can generally see political and social questions more active than mere questions of dogma. The rebellion of the Tae-Pings in 1854 is still vivid in the memories of many people, particularly as it was General Gordon, the martyr of Khartoum, who had to quell the insurrection against the Imperial Government. The strange feature of that insurrection was the leaning of the chief and his friends to what we can only call Christian ideas. Tae-Ping-Wang looked upon himself as a Messiah; he worshipped a kind of Trinity, he actually introduced baptism and the Lord's Supper, and repudiated the worship of idols. His favourite books were those of the Old Testament which treat of the wars of the Israelites, the very chapters which Ulfilas, the apostle of the Goths, left out in his translation as likely to rouse the bellicose tendencies of his countrymen.

While the hatred of Tae-Ping-Wang was chiefly directed against the Manchu dynasty and aristocracy, who for the last two hundred years have kept the real Chinese under their sway, and while, like other rebels, his object was to upset that dynasty and to found

a truly national one, another conspiracy, that of the Boxers, of whom we have lately heard so much, was principally directed against all foreigners, particularly against all Christians and their converts, and aimed at a restoration of a Chinese religion for the Chinese. The Boxers, whether so called from their emblem, the Fist, in the sense of fighting or in the sense of confederates, are one of those many societies or brotherhoods which have undermined the whole soil of China, and are ready to spring up at a moment's notice when they imagine there is work for them to do. Different from the Tae-Pings they hate Christianity, and hope to extirpate everything foreign that is found to have entered China. There is no special religion of the Boxers; they seem to come from all the three religions, but they are decidedly religious, and, before all things, patriotic. Hence we must admit a certain difficulty found by the Chinese Government in their treatment of the Boxers. It is very probable that some of the highest officials in China had strong sympathies with these *francs-tireurs*, and even when these free-lances became mere brigands they had not always the courage to declare openly against them. But this is no excuse for the Chinese Government in tolerating and even encouraging such dastardly deeds as have lately been committed in Pekin against the representatives of European Governments and against missionaries and their converts throughout China. Such conduct will put China for many years outside the pale of civilized nations, and would almost justify that spirit of revenge which has found such plain expression from one who cannot be suspected of lack of chivalrous sentiments.

The origin and spreading of the three established religions in China is of great interest, not only for studying the ramifications of these systems of faith, but also as opening before our eyes a chapter of history and geography of which we had no idea. Before the travels of the Buddhist pilgrims from China to India and from India to China were published, who could have guessed that in the fifth century A.D. human beings would have ventured to climb the mountains that separate China from India, and find their way back by sea from Ceylon along the Burmese, Siamese, and Cambodian coast to their own home? Who had any suspicion that after the third Buddhist council, in the third century B.C., Buddhist missionaries pushed forward to Kashmir and the Himalayan passes, founded settlements not only in China, but among the races of Central Asia, and thus came in contact with the Greeks of Bactria, and with Mongolian and Tartar races settled along the greater rivers, nay, in the very heart of Central Asia? When we consider how Buddhist and Christian settlements existed in Asia from the seventh century, as at Si-gnan-fu, and that these pilgrims must have found practicable or impracticable roads as far as Alexandria in the West, Odessa and Nisibis in Syria, and as far as Hsian-fu in the East; that Persia, too, was open to them, and that they helped each other in teaching and learning their languages, nay, even their alphabets, does not the Asiatic continent assume a totally different aspect? We wonder that here and there in China, Tibet, and Mongolia (Kashgar) books are now forthcoming, as yet almost unintelligible, but most likely of Buddhist origin, which indicate at least the highways on which

travels were possible for the purposes of religious propaganda. The interior of Asia, which formerly looked like an unknown desert, appears now like the back of our hand, intersected by veins indicating something living beneath. Many discoveries await the patient student here, but we shall want for their realization not only the ingenuity of Sénart, Hoernle, and Leumann[1], but the plucky and lucky spade of a Schliemann.

[1] *Über eine von den unbekannten Literatursprachen Mittelasiens*, 1900.

# THE PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS, CHICAGO, 1893[1].

THERE are few things which I so truly regret having missed as the great Parliament of Religions held in Chicago as a part of the Columbian Exhibition in 1893. Who would have thought that what was announced as simply an auxiliary branch of that exhibition could have developed into what it was, could have become the most important part of that immense undertaking, could have become the greatest success of the year, and I do not hesitate to say, could now take its place as one of the most memorable events in the history of the world?

As it seems to me, those to whom the great success of this oecumenical council was chiefly due, I mean President Bonney and Dr. Barrows, hardly made it sufficiently clear at the beginning what was their real purpose and scope. Had they done so, every one who cares for the future of religion might have felt it his bounden duty to take part in the congress. But it seemed at the first glance that it would be a mere show, a part of the great show of industry and art. But instead of a show it developed into a reality, which, if I am not greatly mistaken, will be remembered, aye, will bear fruit, when everything else

[1] Substance of a Lecture delivered in Oxford in 1894, reprinted by permission, from the *Arena*.

of the mighty Columbian Exhibition has long been swept away from the memory of man.

Possibly, like many bright ideas, the idea of exhibiting all the religions of the world grew into something far grander than its authors had at first suspected. Even in America, where people have not yet lost the faculty of admiring, and of giving hearty expression to their admiration, the greatness of that event seems to me not yet fully appreciated, while in other countries vague rumours only have as yet reached the public at large of what took place in the religious parliament at Chicago. Here and there, I am sorry to say, ridicule also, the impotent weapon of ignorance and envy, has been used against what ought to have been sacred to every man of sense and culture; but ridicule is blown away like offensive smoke; the windows are opened, and the fresh air of truth streams in.

It is difficult, no doubt, to measure correctly the importance of events of which we ourselves have been the witnesses. We have only to read histories and chronicles, written some hundreds of years ago by eye-witnesses and by the chief actors in certain events, to see how signally the observers have failed in correctly appreciating the permanent and historical significance of what they saw and heard, or of what they themselves did. Everything is monumental and epoch-making in the eyes of ephemeral critics, but History must wait before she can pronounce a valid judgement, and it is the impatience of the present to await the sober verdict of History which is answerable for so many monuments having been erected in memory of events or of men whose very names are now

unknown, or known to the stones of their pedestals only.

But there is one fact in connexion with the Parliament of Religions which no sceptic can belittle, and on which even contemporary judgement cannot be at fault. Such a gathering of representatives of the principal religions of the world has never before taken place; it is unique, it is unprecedented; nay, we may truly add, it could hardly have been conceived before our own time. Of course even this has been denied, and it has been asserted that the meeting at Chicago was by no means the first realization of a new idea upon this subject, but that similar meetings had taken place before. Is this true or is it not? To me it seems a complete mistake. If the religious parliament was not an entirely new idea, it was certainly the first realization of an idea which has lived silently in the hearts of prophets, or has been uttered now and then by poets only, who are free to dream dreams and to see visions. Let me quote some lines of Browning's, which certainly sound like true prophecy:—

> 'Better pursue a pilgrimage
> Through ancient and through modern times,
> To many peoples, various climes,
> Where I may see saint, savage, sage
> Fuse their respective creeds in one
> Before the general Father's throne.'

Here you have no doubt the idea, the vision of the religious parliament of the world; but Browning was not allowed to see it. *You* have seen it, and America may be proud of having given substance to Browning's dream and to Browning's desire, if only it will see that what has hitherto been achieved must not be allowed to perish again.

To compare that parliament with the council of the Buddhist King Asoka, in the third century before Christ, is to take great liberties with historical facts. Asoka was no doubt an enlightened sovereign, who preached and practised religious toleration more truly than has any sovereign before or after him. I am the last person to belittle his fame; but we must remember that all the people who assembled at his council belonged to one and the same religion, the religion of Buddha, and although that religion was even at that early time (242 B.C.) broken up into numerous sects, yet all who were present at the Great Council professed to be followers of Buddha only. We do not hear of Gainas nor Agîvikas or Brahmans, nor of any other non-Buddhist religion being represented at the Council of Pâtaliputra.

It is still more incongruous to compare the Council of Chicago with the Council of Nicaea. That council was no doubt called an oecumenical council, but what was the οἰκουμένη, the inhabited world, of that time (325 A.D.) compared with the world as represented at the Columbian Exhibition of last year? Nor was there any idea under Constantine of extending the hand of fellowship to any non-Christian religion. On the contrary the object was to narrow the limits of Christian love and toleration, by expelling the followers of Arius from the pale of the Christian church. As to the behaviour of the bishops assembled at Nicaea, the less that is said about it the better; but I doubt whether the members of the Chicago council, including bishops, archbishops, and cardinals, would feel flattered if they were to be likened to the fathers assembled at Nicaea.

One more religious gathering has been quoted as a precedent of the Parliament of Religions at Chicago; it is that of the Emperor Akbar. But although the spirit which moved the Emperor Akbar (1542–1605) to invite representatives of different creeds to meet at Delhi, was certainly the same spirit which stirred the hearts of those who originated the meeting at Chicago, yet not only was the number of religions represented at Delhi much more limited, but the whole purpose was different. Here I say again, I am the last person to try to belittle the fame of the Emperor Akbar. He was dissatisfied with his own religion, the religion founded by Mohammed; and for an emperor to be dissatisfied with his own religion and the religion of his people, augurs, generally, great independence of judgement and true honesty of purpose. We possess full accounts of his work as a religious reformer, from both friendly and unfriendly sources; from Abufazl on one side, and from Badáoní on the other (Introduction to *The Science of Religion*, p. 209 et seq.).

Akbar's idea was to found a new religion, and it was for that purpose that he wished to become acquainted with the prominent religions of the world. He first invited the most learned ulemahs to discuss certain moot points of Islam, but we are told by Badáoní that the disputants behaved very badly, and that one night, as he expresses it, the necks of the ulemahs swelled up, and a horrid noise and confusion ensued. The emperor announced to Badáoní that all who could not behave, and who talked nonsense, should leave the hall, upon which Badáoní remarked that in that case they would *all* have to leave

(loc. cit., p. 221). Nothing of this kind happened at Chicago, I believe. The Emperor Akbar no doubt did all he could to become acquainted with other religions, but he certainly was not half so successful as was the president of the Chicago religious congress in assembling around him representatives of the principal religions of the world. Jews and Christians were summoned to the imperial court, and requested to translate the Old and the New Testament. We hear of Christian missionaries, such as Rodolpho Aquaviva, Antonio de Monserrato, Francisco Enriques and others; nay, for some time a rumour was spread that the emperor himself had actually been converted to Christianity.

Akbar appointed a regular staff of translators, and his library must have been very rich in religious books. Still he tried in vain to persuade the Brahmans to communicate the Vedas to him or to translate them into a language which he could read. He knew nothing of them, except possibly some portions of the Atharva-veda, probably the Upanishads only. Nor was he much more successful with the Zend Avesta. though portions of it were translated for him by one Ardshiv. His minister, Abufazl, tried in vain to assist the emperor in gaining a knowledge of Buddhism; but we have no reason to suppose that the emperor ever cared to become acquainted with the religious systems of China, whether that of Confucius or that of Lâo-tzé. Besides, there was in all these religious conferences the restraining presence of the emperor and of the powerful heads of the different ecclesiastical parties of Islam. Abufazl, who entered fully into the thoughts of Akbar, expressed his conviction that the

religions of the world have all one common ground (loc. cit., p. 210). 'One man,' he writes (p. 211), 'thinks that he worships God by keeping his passions in subjection; another finds self-discipline in watching over the destinies of a nation. The religion of thousands consists in clinging to a mere idea; they are happy in their sloth and unfitness of judging for themselves. But when the time of reflection comes, and men shake off the prejudices of their education, the threads of the web of religious blindness break, and the eye sees the glory of harmoniousness.' 'But,' he adds, 'the ray of such wisdom does not light up every house, nor could every heart bear such knowledge.' 'Again,' he says, 'although some are enlightened, many would observe silence from fear of fanatics, who lust for blood though they look like men. And should any one muster sufficient courage, and openly proclaim his enlightened thoughts, pious simpletons would call him a madman, and throw him aside as of no account, whilst the ill-starred wretches would at once think of heresy and atheism, and go about with the intention of killing him.'

This was written, more than three hundred years ago, by a minister of Akbar, a contemporary of Henry VIII; but if it had been written in our own days, in the days of Bishop Colenso and Dean Stanley, it would hardly have been exaggerated, barring the intention of killing such 'madmen as openly declare their enlightened thoughts'; for burning heretics is no longer either legal or fashionable. How closely even the emperor and his friends were watched by his enemies we may learn from the fact that in some cases he had to see his informants in the dead of night,

sitting on a balcony of his palace, to which his guest had to be pulled up by a rope! There was no necessity for that at Chicago. The parliament at Chicago had not to consider the frowns or smiles of an emperor like Constantine; it was encouraged, not intimidated, by the presence of bishops and cardinals; it was a free and friendly meeting, nay, I may say a brotherly meeting, and what is still more—for even brothers will sometimes quarrel—it was a harmonious meeting from beginning to end. All the religions of the world were represented at the congress, far more completely and far more ably than in the palace at Delhi, and I repeat once more, without fear of contradiction, that the Parliament of Religions at Chicago stands unique, stands unprecedented in the whole history of the world.

There are, after all, not so many religions in the world as people imagine. There are only eight great historical religions which can claim that name on the strength of their possessing sacred books. All these religions came from the East; three from an Aryan, three from a Semitic source, and two from China. The three Aryan religions are the *Vedic*, with its modern offshoots in India, the *Avestic* of Zoroaster in Persia, and the religion of *Buddha*, likewise the offspring of Brahmanism in India. The three great religions of Semitic origin are the *Jewish*, the *Christian*, and the *Mohammedan*. There are, besides, the two Chinese religions, that of *Confucius* and that of *Lâo-tzé*, and that is all; unless we assign a separate place to such creeds as Gainism, a near relative of Buddhism, which was ably represented at Chicago, or the religion of the Sikhs, which is after all but

a compromise between Brahmanism and Mohammedanism.

All these religions were represented at Chicago; the only one that might complain of being neglected was Mohammedanism. Unfortunately the Sultan, in his capacity as Khalif, was persuaded not to send a representative to Chicago. One cannot help thinking that both in his case and in that of the Archbishop of Canterbury, who likewise kept aloof from the congress, there must have been some unfortunate misapprehension as to the real objects of that meeting. The consequence was that Mohammedanism was left without any authoritative representative in a general gathering of all the religions of the world. It was different with the Episcopalian Church of England, for although the archbishop withheld his sanction his church was ably represented both by English and American divines.

But what surprised everybody was the large attendance of representatives of all the other religions of the world. There were Buddhists and Shintoists from Japan, followers of Confucius and Lâo-tzé from China; there was a Parsee to speak for Zoroaster, there were learned Brahmans from India to explain the Veda and Vedânta. Even the most recent phases of Brahmanism were ably and eloquently represented by Mozoomdar, the friend and successor of Keshub Chunder Sen, and the modern reformers of Buddhism in Ceylon had their powerful spokesman in Dharmapâla. A brother of the King of Siam came to speak for the Buddhism of his country. Judaism was defended by learned rabbis, while Christianity spoke through bishops and archbishops, nay, even through a cardinal who is

supposed to stand very near the papal chair. How had these men been persuaded to travel thousands of miles, to spend their time and their money in order to attend a congress, the very character and object of which were mere matters of speculation?

Great credit no doubt is due to Dr. Barrows and his fellow labourers; but it is clear that the world was really ripe for such a congress, nay, was waiting and longing for it. Many people belonging to different religions had been thinking about a universal religion, or at least about a union of the different religions, resting on a recognition of the truths shared in common by all of them, and on a respectful toleration of what is peculiar to each, unless it offended against reason or morality. It was curious to see, after the meeting was over, from how many sides voices were raised, not only expressing approval of what had been done, but regret that it had not been done long ago. And yet I doubt whether the world would really have been ready for such a truly oecumenical council at a much earlier period. We all remember the time, not so very long ago, when we used to pray for Jews, Turks, and infidels, and thought of all of them as true sons of Belial. Mohammed was looked upon as the arch enemy of Christianity, the people of India were idolaters of the darkest die, all Buddhists were atheists, and even the Parsees were supposed to worship the fire as their god.

It is due to a more frequent intercourse between Christians and non-Christians that this feeling of aversion towards and misrepresentation of other religions has of late been considerably softened. Much is due to honest missionaries, who lived in India, China, and

even among the savages of Africa, and who could not help seeing the excellent influence which even less perfect religions may exercise on honest believers. Much also is due to travellers who stayed long enough in countries such as Turkey, China, or Japan to see in how many respects the people there were as good, nay, even better, than those who call themselves Christians. I read not long ago a book of travels by Mrs. Gordon, called *Clear Round*. The author starts with the strongest prejudices against all heathens, but she comes home with the kindliest feelings towards the religions which she has watched in their practical working in India, in Japan, and elsewhere.

Nothing, however, if I am not blinded by my own paternal feelings, has contributed more powerfully to spread a feeling of toleration, nay, in some cases, of respect for other religions, than has the publication of the *Sacred Books of the East*. It reflects the highest credit on Lord Salisbury, at the time Secretary of State for India, and on the university of which he is the chancellor, that so large an undertaking could have been carried out; and I am deeply grateful that it should have fallen to my lot to be the editor of this series, and that I should thus have been allowed to help in laying the solid foundation of the large temple of the religion of the future—a foundation which shall be broad enough to comprehend every shade of honest faith in that Power which by nearly all religions is called *Our Father*, a name only, it is true, and it may be a very imperfect name; yet there is no other name in human language that goes nearer to that for-ever-unknown Majesty in which we ourselves live and move and have our being.

But although this feeling of kindliness for and the desire to be just to non-Christian religions has been growing up for some time, it never before found such an open and solemn recognition as at Chicago. That meeting was not intended, like that under Akbar at Delhi, for elaborating a new religion, but it established a fact of the greatest significance, namely, that there exists an ancient and universal religion, and that the highest dignitaries and representatives of all the religions of the world can meet as members of one common brotherhood, can listen respectfully to what each religion had to say for itself, nay, can join in a common prayer and accept a common blessing, one day from the hands of a Christian archbishop, another day from a Jewish rabbi, and again another day from a Buddhist priest (Dharmapâla). Another fact, also, was established once for all, namely, that the points on which the great religions differ are far less numerous, and certainly far less important, than are the points on which they all agree. The words, 'that God has not left Himself without a witness,' became for the first time revealed as a fact at this congress.

Whoever knows what human nature is will not feel surprised that every one present at the religious parliament looked on his own religion as the best, nay, loved it all the same, even when on certain points it seemed clearly deficient or antiquated as compared with other religions. Yet that predilection did not interfere with a hearty appreciation of what seemed good and excellent in other religions. When an old Jewish rabbi summed up the whole of his religion in the words, 'Be good, my boy, for God's

sake,' no member of the Parliament of Religions would have said No; and when another rabbi declared that the whole law and the prophets depend on our loving God and loving our neighbour as ourselves, there are few religions that could not have quoted from their own sacred scriptures more or less perfect expressions of the same sentiment.

I wish indeed it could have been possible at this parliament to put forward the most essential doctrines of Christianity or Islam, for example, and to ask the representatives of the other religions of the world whether their own sacred books said Yes or No to any of them. For that purpose, however, it would have been necessary, no doubt, to ask each speaker to give chapter and verse for his declaration,—and here is the only weak point that has struck me, and is sure to strike others, in reading the transactions of the Parliament of Religions. Statements were put forward by those who professed to speak in the name of Buddhism, Brahmanism, Christianity, and Zoroastrianism—by followers of these religions who happened to be present—which, if the speakers had been asked for chapter and verse from their own canonical books, would have been difficult to substantiate, or, at all events, would have assumed a very modified aspect. Perhaps this was inevitable, particularly as the rules of the parliament did not encourage anything like discussion, and it might have seemed hardly courteous to call upon a Buddhist archbishop to produce his authority from the Tripiṭaka, or from the nine Dharmas.

We know how much our own Christian sects differ in the interpretation of the Bible, and how they

contradict one another on many of their articles of faith. Yet they all accept the Bible as their highest authority. Whatever doctrine is contradicted by the Bible they would at once surrender as false; whatever doctrine is not supported by it they could not claim as revealed. It is the same with all the other so-called book-religions. Whatever differences of opinion may separate different sects, they all submit to the authority of their own sacred books.

I may therefore be pardoned if I think that the Parliament of Religions, the record of which has been assembled in fifty silent volumes, is in some respects more authoritative than the Parliament that was held at Chicago. At Chicago you had, no doubt, the immense advantage of listening to living witnesses; you were *making* the history of the future—my parliament in type records only the history of the past. Besides, the immense number of hearers, your crowded hall joining in singing sacred hymns, nay, even the magnificent display of colour by the representatives of oriental and occidental creeds—the snowy lawn, the orange and crimson satin, the vermilion brocade of the various ecclesiastical vestments so eloquently described by your reporters—all this contributed to stir an enthusiasm in your hearts which I hope will never die. If there are two worlds, the world of deeds and the world of words, you moved at Chicago in the world of deeds. But in the end what remains of the world of deeds is the world of words, or, as we call it, *history*, and in those fifty volumes you may see the history, the outcome, or, in some cases, the short inscription on the tombstones of those who in their time have battled for truth, as the speakers assembled

at Chicago have battled for truth, for love, and for charity to our neighbours.

I know full well what may be said against all sacred books. Mark, first of all, that not one has been written by the founder of a religion; secondly, that nearly all were written hundreds, in some cases thousands, of years after the rise of the religion which they profess to represent; thirdly, that even after they were written they were exposed to dangers and interpolations; and fourthly, that it requires a very accurate and scholarlike knowledge of their language and of the thoughts of the time when they were composed, in order to comprehend their true meaning. All this should be honestly confessed; and yet there remains the fact that no religion has ever recognized an authority higher than that of its sacred book, whether for the past, or the present, or the future. It was the absence of this authority, the impossibility of checking the enthusiastic descriptions of the supreme excellence of every single religion, that seems to me to have somewhat interfered with the usefulness of that great oecumenical meeting at Chicago.

But let us not forget, therefore, what has been achieved by this parliament in the world of deeds. Thousands of people from every part of the world have for the first time been seen praying together, 'Our Father, which art in heaven,' and have testified to the words of the prophet Malachi,—'Have we not all *one* Father, hath not *one* God created us?' They have declared that 'in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is acceptable to Him.' They have seen with their own eyes that God is not far from each one of those who seek God, if haply

they may feel after Him. Let theologians pile up volume upon volume of what they call theology; religion is a very simple matter, and that which is so simple and yet so all-important to us, the living kernel of religion, can be found, I believe, in almost every creed, however much the husk may vary. And think what that means! It means that above and beneath and behind all religions there is one eternal, one universal religion, a religion to which every man, whether black, or white, or yellow, or red, belongs or may belong.

What can be more disturbing and distressing than to see the divisions in our own religion, and likewise the divisions in the eternal and universal religion of mankind? Not only are the believers in different religions divided from each other, but they think it right to hate and to anathematize each other on account of their belief. As long as religions encourage such feelings none of them can be the true one.

And if it is impossible to prevent theologians from quarrelling, or popes, cardinals, archbishops and bishops, priests and ministers, from pronouncing their anathemas, the true people of God, the universal laity, have surely a higher duty to fulfil. Their religion, whether formulated by Buddha, Mohammed, or Christ, is before all things practical, a religion of love and trust, not of hatred and excommunication.

Suppose that there are and that there always will remain differences of creed, are such differences fatal to a universal religion? Must we hate one another because we have different creeds, or because we express in different ways what we believe?

Let us look at some of the most important articles

of faith, such as *miracles*, *the immortality of the soul*, and *the existence of God*. It is well known that both Buddha and Mohammed declined to perform miracles, nay, despised them if required as evidence in support of the truth of their doctrines. If, on the contrary, the founder of our own religion appealed, as we are told, to His works in support of the truth of His teaching, does that establish either the falsehood or the truth of the Buddhist, the Mohammedan, or the Christian religion? May there not be truth even without miracles? Nay, as others would put it, may there not be truth even if resting apparently on the evidence of miracles only? Whenever all three religions proclaim the same truth, may they not all be true, even if they vary slightly in their expression, and may not their fundamental agreement serve as stronger evidence even than all miracles?

Or take a more important point, the belief in the immortality of the soul. Christianity and Mohammedanism teach it, ancient Mosaism seems almost to deny it, while Buddhism refrains from any positive utterance, neither asserting nor denying it. Does even that necessitate rupture and excommunication? Are we less immortal because the Jews doubted and the Buddhists shrank from asserting the indestructible nature of the soul?

Nay, even what is called *atheism* is, often, not the denial of a Supreme Being, but simply a refusal to recognize what seem to some minds human attributes, unworthy of the Deity. Whoever thinks that he can really deny Deity, must also deny humanity; that is, he must deny himself, and that, as you know, is a logical impossibility.

But true religion, that is practical, active, living religion, has little or nothing to do with such logical or metaphysical quibbles. Practical religion is life, is a new life, a life in the sight of God; and it springs from what may truly be called a new birth. And even this belief in a new birth is by no means an exclusively Christian idea. Nicodemus might ask, How can a man be born again? The old Brahmans, however, knew perfectly well the meaning of that second birth. They called themselves *Dvi-ga*, that is Twice-born, because their religion had led them to discover their divine birthright, long before *we* were taught to call ourselves the children of God.

In this way it would be possible to discover a number of fundamental doctrines, shared in common by the great religions of the world, though clothed in slightly varying phraseology. Nay, I believe it would have been possible, even at Chicago, to draw up a small number of articles of faith, not, of course, thirty-nine, to which all who were present could have honestly subscribed. And think what that would have meant! It rests with us to carry forth the torch that has been lighted in America, and not to allow it to be extinguished again till a beacon has been raised lighting up the whole world, and drawing towards it the eyes and hearts of all the sons of men in brotherly love and in reverence for that God who has been worshipped since the world began, albeit in different languages and under different names, but never before in such unison, in such world-embracing harmony and love, as at the great religious council at Chicago.

LETTER TO THE REV. JOHN HENRY BARROWS, D.D.,
*Chairman of the General Committee.*

Easter Sunday, April 2nd, 1893.

DEAR SIR,—What I have aimed at in my Gifford Lectures on 'Natural Religion' is to show that all religions are natural, and you will see from my last volume on *Theosophy or Psychological Religion* that what I hope for is not simply a reform, but a complete revival of religion, more particularly of the Christian religion. You will hardly have time to read the whole of my volume before the opening of your Religious Congress at Chicago, but you can easily see the drift of it. I had often asked myself the question how independent thinkers and honest men like St. Clement and Origen came to embrace Christianity, and to elaborate the first system of Christian theology. There was nothing to induce them to accept Christianity, or to cling to it, if they had found it in any way irreconcilable with their philosophical convictions. They were philosophers first, Christians afterward. They had nothing to gain and much to lose by joining and remaining in this new sect of Christians. We may safely conclude therefore that they found their own philosophical convictions, the final outcome of the long preceding development of philosophical thought in Greece, perfectly compatible with the religious and moral doctrines of Christianity as conceived by themselves.

Now, what was the highest result of Greek philosophy as it reached Alexandria, whether in its Stoic or neo-Platonic garb? It was the ineradicable con-

viction that there is Reason or Logos in the world. When asked, Whence that Reason, as seen by the eye of science in the phenomenal world, they said: 'From the cause of all things which is beyond all names and comprehension, except so far as it is manifested or revealed in the phenomenal world.'

What we call the different types or ideas, or logoi, in the world, are the logoi or thoughts or wills of that Being whom human language has called God. These thoughts, which embraced everything that is, existed at first as thoughts, as a thought-world (*κόσμος νοητός*), before by will and force they could become what we see them to be, the types or species realized in the visible world (*κόσμος ὁρατός*). So far all is clear and incontrovertible, and a sharp line is drawn between this philosophy and another, likewise powerfully represented in the previous history of Greek philosophy, which denied the existence of that eternal Reason, denied that the world was thought and willed, as even the Klamaths, a tribe of Red Indians, profess and ascribe the world, as we see it as men of science, to purely mechanical causes, to what we now call uncreate protoplasm, assuming various casual forms by means of natural selection, influence of environment, survival of the fittest, and all the rest.

The critical step which some of the philosophers of Alexandria took, while others refused to take it, was to recognize the perfect realization of the Divine Thought or Logos of manhood in Christ, as in the true sense the Son of God; not in the vulgar mythological sense, but in the deep metaphysical meaning of which the term *υἱὸς μονογενής* had long been possessed in Greek philosophy. Those who declined to take that

step, such as Celsus and his friends, did so either because they denied the possibility of any Divine Thought ever becoming fully realized in the flesh or in the phenomenal world, or because they could not bring themselves to recognize that realization in Jesus of Nazareth. St. Clement's conviction that the phenomenal world was a realization of the Divine Reason was based on purely philosophical grounds, while his conviction that the ideal or the Divine conception of manhood had been fully realized in Christ and in Christ only, dying on the Cross for the truth as revealed to Him and by Him, could have been based on historical grounds only.

Everything else followed. Christian morality was really in complete harmony with the morality of the Stoic school of philosophy, though it gave to it a new life and a higher purpose. But by means of Christian philosophy the whole world assumed a new aspect. It was seen to be supported and pervaded by Reason or Logos, it was throughout teleological, thought and willed by a rational power. The same Divine presence was now perceived for the first time in all its fullness and perfection in the one Son of God, the pattern of the whole race of men henceforth to be called 'the sons of God.'

This was the groundwork of the earliest Christian theology, as presupposed by the author of the fourth Gospel, and likewise by many passages in the Synoptical Gospels, though fully elaborated for the first time by such men as St. Clement and Origen. If we want to be true and honest Christians, we must go back to those earliest ante-Nicene authorities, the true Fathers of the Church. Thus only can we use the words:

'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word became flesh,' not as thoughtless repeaters, but as honest thinkers and believers. The first sentence, 'In the beginning was the Word,' requires thought and thought only; the second, 'and the Logos became flesh,' requires faith—faith such as those who knew Jesus had in Jesus, and which we may accept unless we have any reasons for doubting their testimony.

There is nothing new in all this, it is only the earliest Christian theology restated, restored, and revised. It gives us at the same time a truer conception of the history of the whole world, showing us that there was a purpose in the ancient religions and philosophies of the world, and that Christianity was really from the beginning a synthesis of the best thoughts of the past, as they had been slowly elaborated by the two principal representatives of the human race, the Aryan and the Semitic.

On this ancient foundation, which was strangely neglected, if not purposely rejected, at the time of the Reformation, a true revival of the Christian religion and a reunion of all its divisions may become possible, and I have no doubt that your Congress of the religions of the world might do excellent work for the resuscitation of pure and primitive ante-Nicene Christianity.

Yours very truly,

F. MAX MÜLLER.

# WHY I AM NOT AN AGNOSTIC[1].

WHEN I was lately asked to take part in a Symposium in the *Agnostic Annual* on the question 'Why live a Moral Life?' I felt it an honour to join a company of thinkers and writers so eminent, each in his own subject, as the supporters of that journal. But I felt bound at the same time to declare that I had really no right to claim the title of Agnostic. If, as we have been told, Agnosticism implied no more than a negation of Gnosticism, and if by Gnosticism were meant the teaching of such philosophers as Cerinthus or Valentinus or Marcion, I believe I might say that I do not hold their opinions, that I am certainly not a Gnostic, although I strongly sympathize with what was meant originally by *Gnosis*, as distinct from *Pistis*.

But this merely negative definition of Agnosticism would hardly be satisfactory to the leading Agnostics of our time. For though Agnosticism excluded Alexandrian Gnosticism, it might include ever so many views of the universe, opposed to each other on many points, though agreeing in a common renunciation of Gnosticism.

Agnosticism, however, as now understood, seems to mean something very different. It has been explained to mean 'that a man shall not say he knows or believes that which he has no scientific grounds for

[1] *Nineteenth Century*, December, 1894.

professing to know or believe.' Perhaps this, too, is an article which few men would object to sign, though it leaves the door open to a good deal of controversy as to what is meant by 'scientific grounds.' Some astronomers held that the earth formed the centre of the world, others denied it; both, as they thought, on scientific grounds. The opponents of Galileo produced what they considered scientific grounds for their opinions; Galileo produced scientific grounds for his own conviction. and no one would wish that the two parties should have confined themselves to mere Agnosticism, to a profession of ignorance of the true position of the earth or the sun in our planetary system—should have shrugged their shoulders and said 'Who knows?'

We enter into a new atmosphere of thought if, as Agnostics, we are asked 'to confess that we know nothing of what may be beyond phenomena.' But this, too, if properly interpreted, is an article which few who can see through the meaning of words would decline to accept, while people accustomed to philosophical terminology might possibly consider such a statement as almost tautological. What may be, or even what is, beyond phenomena is the same as what we call transcendent; that is, what transcends or lies beyond the horizon of our knowledge, and therefore leaves us ignorant, or Agnostics. Phenomenal means what appears to be, in distinction from what is, and if knowledge were restricted to what is, then what only appears to be could not possibly claim to produce real knowledge.

But if all these propositions are so self-evident as to make controversy almost impossible, it may seem

strange that Agnosticism, not only the name, but the thing itself, should of late have been represented as the peculiar property of the nineteenth century. The whole history of philosophy forms but one continuous commentary on the fact that there are things which we can, and others which we cannot, know; nay, it is the chief object of all critical philosophy to draw a sharp line between the two. If we begin the history of systematic philosophy with Socrates, as represented to us by his disciples, we know that Socrates, though declared the wisest of men by the oracle of Delphi, declared that he knew one thing only, and that was that he knew nothing. This has been thought by some to be a mere expression of excessive humility on the part of Socrates, just as when, in the *Hippias Minor*, he says, 'My deficiency is proved to me by the fact that when I meet one of you who are famous for wisdom, and to whose wisdom all the Hellenes are witnesses, I am found out to know nothing.' But there was really a much deeper meaning in his confession of ignorance, for he claimed this knowledge of his ignorance as a proof of his wisdom. He can only have meant, therefore, that he knew all human knowledge to be concerned with phenomena only, and that he knew nothing of what may be beyond phenomena. If this was the beginning of all philosophy, the end of all philosophy was to find out how we know even this; how we know that we are ignorant, and why we must be ignorant of everything beyond what is phenomenal.

That question had to wait for its final answer till Kant wrote his *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, and gave a scientific demonstration of the inherent limits of

human knowledge. In the meantime the confession of our ignorance, the true philosophical Agnosticism, had found utterance again and again from the lips of all the most eminent philosophers. They did not call it Agnosticism, because that word, as seeming to exclude Gnosticism only, would have conveyed a too narrow and therefore a false idea. Greek philosophers called it with a technical name, *Agnoia* [1], or, if they wished to express the proper attitude of the mind towards transcendental questions, they called it *Epoche*, i. e. suspense of judgement. During the Middle Ages exactly the same idea which now goes by the name of Agnosticism was well known as *Docta Ignorantia*, i. e. the ignorance founded on the knowledge of our ignorance, or of our impotence to grasp anything beyond what is phenomenal.

In both these senses, therefore, i. e. in the sense of not being a follower of the Alexandrian Gnostics, and in that of admitting that all the objects of our knowledge are *ipso facto* phenomenal, I should not hesitate to call myself an Agnostic. And yet I cannot do so for two reasons: (1) because I strongly sympathize with the objects which in the beginning Alexandrian Gnosticism and neo-Platonism had in view, and (2) because I hold that the human mind in its highest functions is not confined to a knowledge of phenomena only.

To begin with the second point, I need hardly say that the very name phenomenal or apparent implies that there is something that appears, something of which we can therefore predicate that it appears, something that seems to be, that is relative to us, and

[1] M. M., *Natural Religion*, p. 225.

so far, but so far only, known to us. That which appears is, before it appears, unknown to us, but it becomes known to us in the only way in which it can be known, that is by its appearance, by its phenomenal manifestation, by its becoming an object of human knowledge. It is known to us as that without which the phenomenal would be impossible, nay, unthinkable. That without which the phenomenal would be unthinkable is sometimes called the noumenal, the real, the absolute, and if we call its absence unthinkable, we imply that there are certain forms of our thought from which our phenomenal knowledge cannot escape, the well-known Kantian forms of intuition and understanding. These, as Kant has shown, cannot be the mere result of phenomenal experience because they possess a character of necessity which no phenomenal experience can ever claim. To take a very simple case. It is well known that we never see more than one side of the moon. Yet such are the powers both of our sensuous intuition (*Anschauungsformen*) and of the categories of our understanding, that we know with perfect certainty, a certainty such as no experience, if repeated a thousand times, could ever give us, that there must be another side which on this earth we shall never see, but which to our consciousness is as real as the side which we do see. These forms of sensuous intuition admit of no exception. The rule that every material body must have more than one side is absolute. In the same way, if we think at all, we must submit to the law of causality, a category of our understanding, without which even the simplest phenomenal knowledge would be impossible. We never see a horse, we are only aware of certain states

of our own consciousness, produced through our senses; but that these affections presuppose a cause, or, as we call it, an object outside us, is due to that law of causality within us which we must obey, whether we like it or not.

If, then, we have to recognize in every single object of our phenomenal knowledge a something or a power which manifests itself in it, and which we know, and can only know, through its phenomenal manifestation, we have also to acknowledge a power that manifests itself in the whole universe. We may call that power unknown or inscrutable, but we may also call it the best known, because all our knowledge is derived from a scrutiny of its phenomenal manifestations. That it is, we know; what it is by itself, that is, out of relation to us or unknown by us, of course we cannot know, as little as we can eat our cake and have it; but we do know that without it the manifest or phenomenal universe would be impossible.

This is the first step which carries us beyond the limits of *Agnoia*, and by which I am afraid I should forfeit at once the right of calling myself an Agnostic. But another and even more fatal step is to follow, which, I fear, will deprive me altogether of any claim to that title. I cannot help discovering in the universe an all-pervading causality or a reason for everything; for, even when in my phenomenal ignorance I do not yet know a reason for this or that, I am forced to admit that there exists some such reason; I feel bound to admit it, because to a mind like ours nothing can exist without a sufficient reason. But how do I know that? Here is the point where I cease to be an Agnostic. I do not know it from experience,

and yet I know it with a certainty greater than any which experience could give. This also is not a new discovery. The first step towards it was made at a very early time by the Greek philosophers, when they turned from the observation of outward nature to higher spheres of thought, and recognized in nature the working of a mind or Νοῦς, which pervades the universe. Anaxagoras, who was the first to postulate such a Νοῦς in nature, ascribed to it not much more than the first impulse to the interaction of his Homoiomeries. But even his Νοῦς was soon perceived to be more than a mere *primum mobile*, more than the κινοῦν ἀκινητόν. We ourselves, after thousands of years of physical and metaphysical research, can say no more than that there is Νοῦς, that there is mind and reason in nature. *Sa Majesté le Hasard* has long been dethroned in all scientific studies, and neither natural selection, nor struggle for life, nor the influence of environment, or any other *aliases* of it, will account for the *Logos*, the thought, which with its thousand eyes looks at us through the transparent curtain of nature and calls for thoughtful recognition from the *Logos* within us. If any philosopher can persuade himself that the true and well-ordered genera of nature are the result of mechanical causes, whatever name he may give them, he moves in a world altogether different from my own. He belongs to a period of thought antecedent to Anaxagoras. To Plato these genera were ideas; to the Peripatetics they were words or *Logoi*; to both they were manifestations of thought. Unless these thoughts had existed previous to their manifestation or individualization in the phenomenal world, the human mind could never have discovered

them there and named them. We ought not to say any longer in the language of the childhood of our race, 'In the beginning God created heaven and earth.' As Christians we have to say in the language of St. John and his Platonic and Gnostic predecessors, 'In the beginning there was the *Logos*.' If we call that *Logos* the Son, and if we speak of a Father whom no one knows but the Son, the so-called *Deus ante intellectum*, we are using human language, but if we know that all human language is metaphorical we shall never attempt to force these words into a narrow literal meaning. To do so is to create mythology, and with it all its concomitant dangers. What lies behind the curtain of these words is, in fact, the legitimate realm of *Agnoia* or Agnosticism. But all that lies on this side of the curtain is our domain, the domain of language and afterwards of science, which in the chaos of phenomena has discovered, and with every new generation of Aristotles, Bacons, and Darwins is bent on discovering more and more, a hidden *Cosmos*, or the reflex of that *Logos*, without which Nature would be illogical, irrational, chaotic, and existing by accident only, not by the will of a rational Power. Call that Power the Father, or call it a Person, and you neither gain nor lose anything, for these words also are metaphorical only, and what constitutes the personal element in man or any other living being is as unknown to us as what constitutes the personal element in the author, the thinker, the speaker, or creator of the *logoi*. All I maintain is, that if we ever speak of a *Logos* and of *logoi*, and understand clearly what we mean by these words, we can no longer say that in the beginning there was

protoplasm, and that the whole world was evolved from it by purely mechanical or external agencies. If we have once recognized in all the genera or generations of the natural world, not simply the unknown, or a substance and power that is inscrutable, but the thoughts and will of a mind, that mind, so far from being inscrutable, undergoes a constant scrutiny in its endless manifestations at the hand of human science. It is in fact the one subject of all our knowledge, from the first attempts at roughly grouping and naming it to the latest efforts of scientific research, intended to classify, to comprehend, and understand it. The whole of our knowledge of nature becomes thus a recognition of the *logoi* of nature by the *Logos* of ourselves. Each genus becomes a *logos*, an eternal thought or an eternal word; nay, it seems to follow from this that there is in nature no room for anything but genera; no room for species or εἴδη in the proper sense of these terms. Here we see how the Science of Language becomes the Science of Thought. If it is unity of origin that constitutes a genus, true science knows indeed of individuals which represent a genus, but not of species, though for practical purposes the human mind may give that name to varieties in their more or less inheritable and permanent form; such varieties being in reality no more than the necessary consequence of individualization and manifoldness. If each individual differs, and must differ, by something from all other individuals of the same genus, the accumulation of these differentiating somethings leads naturally to the formation of what is called a species. We may then speak, for instance, of

different varieties or even species of horses, including the three-toed hipparion; but there is but one ἱππότης, if we have but the eye to see it, as Plato used to say.

I hardly venture to say whether I know all this, or whether I only believe it. I cannot help seeing order, law, reason or *Logos* in the world, and I cannot account for it by merely *ex post* events, call them what you like—survival of the fittest, natural selection, or anything else. Anyhow, this Gnosis is to me irresistible, and I dare not therefore enter the camp of the Agnostics under false colours. I am not aware that on my way to this Gnosis I have availed myself of anything but the facts of our direct consciousness, and the conclusions that can be logically deduced from them. Without these two authorities I do not feel bound to accept any testimony, whether revealed or unrevealed. It is history alone which can tell us how these ideas arose and how they grew from century to century. What I have tried to do, however imperfectly, is to discover the causes which in the history of the world have led men to accept what, according to some philosophers, rested neither on the evidence of their senses nor on the logical conclusions of their reason. I have lately attempted to trace these causes and their historical progress in my Gifford Lectures, more particularly in the last volume, called *Theosophy, or Psychological Religion*. In one sense I hope I am, and always have been, an Agnostic, that is, in relying on nothing but historical facts and in following reason as far as it will take us in matters of the intellect, and in never pretending that conclusions are certain which are not demonstrated or

demonstrable. This attitude of the mind has always been recognized as the *conditio sine qua non* of all philosophy. If, in future, it is to be called Agnosticism, then I am a true Agnostic; but if Agnosticism excludes a recognition of an eternal reason pervading the natural and the moral world, if to postulate a rational cause for a rational universe is called Gnosticism, then I am a Gnostic, and a humble follower of the greatest thinkers of our race, from Plato and the author of the Fourth Gospel to Kant and Hegel.

# IS MAN IMMORTAL?[1]

MOST people would feel reluctant to express their opinion on the immortality of the soul, a subject which has occupied the thoughts of men since the first dawn of recorded thought and has elicited utterances, more or less inspired, from the best and wisest in every country and every century. We possess to-day no more materials for the satisfactory treatment of this problem than did the sages of Egypt, Palestine, India, Persia, and Greece. Are we likely, then, to see further than they or are our arguments likely to be more conclusive or more persuasive than those of Plato or St. Paul?

There is an excellent book by Alger, published in America, on *The Doctrine of a Future Life*, with a valuable appendix by Ezra Abbot, librarian of Harvard College, containing the titles of 4,977 books relating to the nature, origin, and destiny of the soul. Is not that enough? Can we hope that anything may be said on the immortality of the soul that has not been said before, whether for or against it? Shall we ever know anything about the soul after the death of this body? It stands to reason that if we take 'to know' in the ordinary sense of the word we cannot even in this life know the soul or anything relating to its nature, origin, and destiny, and yet there are these

[1] American Press Association, 1895.

4,977 books and probably a good many more! Knowledge possessed by men can have but one beginning. It begins with the senses. It does not end there—far from it. But, just as every man has to begin with being a babe, all human knowledge, however abstract and sublime in the end, must make its first entry through the narrow gate of the senses. This may easily be misunderstood. But if properly understood it cannot be denied, whether by Gnostics or Agnostics.

If, then, no human eye has ever seen, no human ear has ever heard, no human hand has ever handled the soul, how are we to know the soul, and how are we to predicate anything of it, particularly such a predicate as immortal, which likewise has never come within the sphere of our sensuous experience? If I attempt to answer this question, it is chiefly because I believe it offers a good opportunity for showing once more what I have tried to prove in several of my books, and more particularly in my *Science of Thought*, 1887—namely, that all philosophy must in the end become a philosophy of language, and because it is from this point of view alone that I may hope to throw a new ray of light on the problem of the immortality of the soul.

I am quite aware that this ray of light will seem anything but light to many among the 7,000,000 readers for whom these papers on 'The Immortality of the Soul' are intended. But that cannot be helped. We must learn Hebrew if we want to understand the Old Testament. We must know English if we wish to appreciate Shakespeare.

I therefore warn my readers that a certain acquaintance with the language of philosophy will be

required if they wish to know something about the soul, something more than its name, which we all use so glibly.

In spite of certain objections by which this thesis of mine, the inseparability of word and thought, was greeted when first put forward, its truth, its palpable truth has since been recognized, directly or indirectly, by many philosophical writers who take the trouble to think for themselves, instead of merely repeating the watchwords whether of Locke or Hume, of Kant or Hegel. That I do not claim to have been the first to discover this self-evident truth I have tried to show in an article on 'My Predecessors,' published in *The Contemporary Review*, vol. liv[1].

One lesson in the philosophy of language which hardly anybody would venture to deny, though few seem inclined to avail themselves of it, is that before we reason, before we combine our terms, we are in duty bound to define them. Before we say that the soul is or is not immortal we must say what we mean by the word *soul*.

The word we have, we hear it, we learn it, and we use it constantly in all kinds of meanings, but before we use it, and before we reason about it, we ought surely to try to find out whence the word came to us and how it first arose. The history of the words for *soul* in the various languages is a very long history, far too long to be given here. I have given it in several of my books (*Anthropological Religion*, 1892, p. 196 seq.), and the result may be summed up in a few words. Words for *soul* mostly turn out to have been at first words for the visible or tangible wind, or the breath

[1] *Last Essays*, series i. p. 27.

issuing from the mouth. They became gradually divested of their material and visible attributes till they were brought to mean the vital breath or something stirring and striving within us, something of which breath was the visible sign, and when this breath of life also had been discovered as something accidental, something that comes and goes, then what remained—that which was not breath or anima, but of which anima, as living breath, formed only an attribute, was singled out and signed by its own name, whether *psyche* or *thymos*, or *soul* or *âme*, all having meant originally breathing or commotion. Whenever the old words for the visible breath were retained in their material meaning, a new word had to be formed to distinguish that which breathed from its outward manifestation—the actual breath; while, if new words had been used for the breath that went in and out of the nose and mouth, the old word for it was often retained in a higher and immaterial sense. It must be clear that a word cannot mean more than what it was meant to mean, so that we may truly call things the meanings of our words. This true nominalism is nowhere more clearly recognized than in Sanskrit, where even in ordinary parlance things are called parlarthas—i. e. meanings of words. Even when we do not know a thing we ask in Sanskrit: Kam padartham pasyasi? What thing do you see?—literally, What word-meaning do you see? I doubt whether any other language can match this.

By the ordinary process of divestment or abstraction the word which, after being freed from its etymological and traditional meanings, remained for soul no longer meant anything visible. It no longer

meant breathing or life or even thinking, with the whole of its *ars combinatoria*, but it was meant for that of which all these are essential attributes; so that without it the body would not be the body, nor breath breath, nor spirit spirit, nor life life, nor thought in all its varieties thought. We see, then, that after it was understood that the word *soul* was not open to mean breath, spirit, life, or thought, there remained but one positive predicate—namely, that the soul is that which is, and without which body, breath, life, and thought would not be what they are. Now that without which other things that are cannot be may surely claim being for itself. We may go on divesting the soul of ever so many things, in the end there must always remain that which was divested—the naked, the invisible soul.

Of course it may be said that soul is a mere word, though I thought I had shown that there could be no such thing as a mere word, a *vox et praeterea nihil*. The logicians will, of course, trot out their centaur and defy us to prove that centaur is anything but a mere word. Now, whatever the etymology of *centaur* may be, whatever its original purpose may have been, whether cloud or anything else, we are quite willing to admit that there is no such word in *rerum natura* as a horse with a human head. But what exists in *rerum natura* are horses and men, and Greek poets had as much right to combine the two as the Assyrians to assign wings to bulls. The combination does not exist, but the two things combined exist and are brought by the senses to the knowledge of man. This combining of things by themselves incompatible, and giving a fanciful name to such

combination, is a very different process from selecting any natural object and taking away from it all that can be taken away without actually destroying it. To use a practical illustration, we may take a man and remove his hair and beard, his nails, his fingers, hands, arms, feet, and legs, and yet, if he happily survive the process, as we know he may, the living stump remains and is still the man. He is not a mere centaur. In the same way the indistinct embryo, without as yet feet and legs and fingers and hands and arms, is something, whatever we may call it—is, in fact, the man, and not a mere product of fancy. And so it is with the soul of man, if we simply define soul as that without which breath, life, feeling, movement, and thought could not be, and which is itself neither breath, nor life, nor feeling, nor movement, nor thought: we may not know what this soul is apart from its living body, but we do know that it is something—nay, something more real—than anything that has been taken from it, and not a mere chimera sprung from the poet's brain.

It may also be said that we have never established our right to this kind of abstraction, to this violent process of divesting things of what belongs to them in *rerum natura*. This, however, would be tantamount to saying that we have no right to think. We should have no longer any right to speak, for instance, of a circle, but only of a cart-wheel or a cheese. We should not be allowed to say that a circle is a figure in which the radii from the centre to the circumference must be equal. All we might possibly be allowed to say would be that a wheelwright has to cut all the spokes of a cart-wheel of the same length. We could

not speak of a centre or a circumference, but only of an axle and a felly, and such an expression as 'must' would have to be altogether tabooed. All such propositions as that the radii of a circle must be equal, or that the straight line—*linea directa*—must be the shortest or most direct line, would have to be set aside as merely nominal definitions; and as there is in the world of the senses no such thing as a circle or a straight line—as these, in fact, are mere words—we are told that soul also is nothing but a word. It is curious that philosophers who hold such opinions do not see that they themselves would have no arguments whatever to support them, no words even with which to form a syllogism, for every syllogism requires general terms, and every general term would in their eyes be a mere word or noise. But the world we live in is not a world of empty noises, but of significant words. Our knowledge, though it is not a mere knowledge of words, is certainly knowledge by means of words. We know nothing, not even a stone, or a tree, or an animal, except through words. The senses, which we share with the animal, never give us an animal, or a tree, or a stone. There is no such thing as an animal in the whole world. There is not a quadruped or a bird, there is not even a dog or a sparrow. All these are the creatures of language. Nay, our whole world as really known—that is, as conceived by us—is the creation of language, and in this sense nothing is truer than that in the beginning was the word, and all things were made by it, and without it was not anything made that was made. This may be called neo-Platonism or Mysticism or anything else. It is nevertheless the truth, the whole

truth and nothing but the truth, though no doubt it requires a certain effort to see through the veil of words and realize the truth that is behind them and in them. Many words are certainly imperfect and misleading, so much so that the whole history of philosophy may truly be called a battle against words. The words for soul also have played us many tricks.

A man speaks of his soul, but who or what the possessor of a soul could be we ask in vain. The soul may be said to possess the *ego*—not the *ego* the soul. If spirit is used for soul, people have actually maintained that they have seen spirits, and ghosts are recognized as visible spirits or souls. It is difficult to frame a word for *soul*. The best name I know is the Sanskrit name âtman, which means self. This âtman is very carefully distinguished from the aham, or *ego*. It lies far beyond it, and, while the aham has a beginning and an end and is the result of circumstances, the âtman is not, but is and always has been and always will be itself only. We must accept this âtman, this self, or the soul, as something of which we know that it is. This may seem very little, but to be is really far more important and far more wonderful than to breathe, to live, to feel, or to think. Thinking, feeling, living, and breathing are impossible without a being. Being may be called the poorest, but it is at the same time the most marvellous concept of our whole mind, for the soul, being that which is (*οὐσία*), is at the same time that without which nothing else can be. It is the *sine qua non* of all we are, we see, we hear, we apprehend and comprehend. It is not our body nor our breath, nor our life nor our heart, nor what is most difficult to give up—our mind

and intellect. It is simply that in which all these reside—that, in fact, in which we move and have our being.

We can now take a second step. If what we mean by soul, unknown as it may be otherwise, is at all events known to be not the body, on what possible ground could we make the assertion that the soul is mortal? Mortal is applicable to the body only, for it means originally decaying, crumbling, falling to pieces. *Mor-bus*, illness, is that which wears the body; *mors*, death, that which wears it out and utterly dissolves it. This we can see with our eyes, but no experience has ever taught us that the soul, or what we mean by soul, is worn out, does ever decay or crumble or dissolve. The breath may fail, the body may die, the intellect also may grow weak, but of the soul we can never say that it is at any time more or less than it has always been. What right have we, then, to call the soul mortal and to apply a term such as mortal, which is peculiar to the body, to that which is not the body, the soul? Whatever else we may or may not predicate of the soul, our very opponents would not allow us to create such a centaur as a mortal soul, and if we are not allowed to call the soul mortal why should we not call it nonmortal or immortal? To deny the nonmortality of the soul would be the same as to deny its existence. But all this would probably not satisfy those who want to be certain not only that the soul cannot die, but who wish to know how it will fare with it after the decay and death of its present mortal body. They want, in fact, to know what they know quite well that they cannot know, and were not meant to know. Let us remember that

we do not know what the soul was before this life—nay, even what it was during the first years of our childhood. Yet we believe on very fair evidence that what we call our soul (though it is not ours, but we are his) existed from the moment of our birth. What ground have we, then, to doubt that it was even before that moment? To ascribe to the soul a beginning on our birthday would be the same as to claim for it an end on the day of our death, for whatever has a beginning has an end. If, then, in the absence of any other means of knowledge, we may take refuge in analogy, might we not say that it will be with the soul hereafter as it has been here, and that the soul, after its earthly setting, will rise again, much as it rose here? This is not a syllogism, but it is analogy, and in a cosmos like ours analogy has a right to claim some weight, at all events in the absence of any proof to the contrary.

Soon, however, follows another question, a question which has probably been asked by every human heart. Granting that what we mean by the word soul cannot, without self-contradiction, be mortal, will that soul be itself, know itself, and will it know others whom it has known before? For the next life, it is said, would not be worth living if the soul did not recollect itself, recognize not only itself, but those also whom it has known and loved on earth—in fact, if it did not retain its mundane experience, its knowledge of Greek, Latin, and English. Here, too, analogy alone can supply some kind of answer. 'It will be hereafter as it has been' is not, in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, an argument that can be treated with contempt, least of all by

those who hold that all our knowledge must be positive, must be based on past experience. In this case, it is true that we have had but one experience; but is that any reason why, because it is unique, we should reject it? Our soul here may be said to have risen without any recollection of itself and of the circumstances of its former existence. It may not even recollect the circumstances of its first days on earth, but it has within it the consciousness of its eternity, and the conception of a beginning is as impossible for it as that of an end, and if souls were to meet again hereafter as they met in this life, as they loved in this life, without knowing that they had met and loved before, would the next life be so very different from what this life has been here on earth—would it be so utterly intolerable and really not worth living?

Personally I must confess to one small weakness. I cannot help thinking that the souls towards whom we feel drawn in this life are the very souls whom we knew and loved in a former life, and that the souls who repel us here, we do not know why, are the souls that earned our disapproval, the souls from which we kept aloof in a former life. But let that pass as what others have a perfect right to call it—a mere fancy. Only let us remember that if our love is the love of what is merely phenomenal, the love of the body, the kindness of the heart, the vigour and wisdom of the intellect, our love is the love of changing and perishable things, and our soul may have to grope in vain among the shadows of the dead. But if our love, under all its earthly aspects, was the love of the true soul, of what is immortal and divine in every man and woman, that

love cannot die, but will find once more what seems beautiful, true, and lovable in worlds to come as in worlds that have passed. This is very old wisdom, but we have forgotten it. Thousands of years ago an Indian sage, when parting from his wife, told her in plain words: 'We do not love the husband in the husband, nor the wife in the wife, nor the children in the children. What we love in them, what we truly love in everything, is the eternal âtman, the immortal self,' and, as we should add, the immortal God, for the immortal self and the immortal God must be one.

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